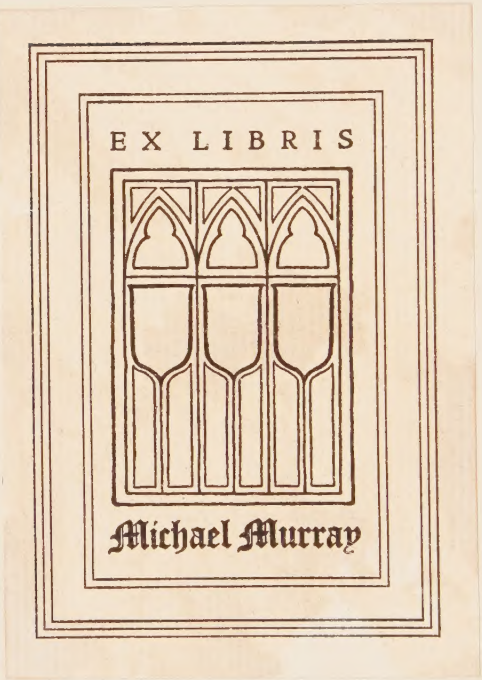
INSTRUCTIONS ON PREACHING

Rev. P. BOYLE, C.M.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Instructions on Preaching, Catechising and Clerical Life

By St Francis Borgia, St Francis of Sales, St Augustine and St Jerome; with an outline of the Method of Preaching recommended by St Vincent de Paul, and an Encyclical on Preaching issued by order of Pope Leo XIII

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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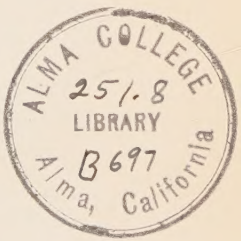
Instructions on Preaching
Catechising and Clerical Life
By Saints and Fathers of the Church

Translated by the
Rev. PATRICK BOYLE, C.M.

Let not the discourses of the ancients escape thee, for they have learned of their fathers. For of them thou shalt learn understanding and to give an answer in the time of need.
—*Ecclesiasticus* viii, 11, 12.



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PREFACE

THE instructions contained in this volume have been translated into English in the hope that they may be useful to ecclesiastical students. They contain the thoughts on preaching and on the virtues of the clerical state of men whose sanctity, learning and practical experience entitle them to speak with authority.

First in order is placed a short treatise on preaching by St Francis Borgia, third General of the Society of Jesus. In this work the soundest principles of rhetoric are inculcated, and the sacred character of preaching is made peculiarly prominent. This little treatise, as may be seen by reference to the Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jesus, Tom. I, pp. 1807-1817, art. Borgia, has often been reprinted along with the "Theologiæ Pastoralis Enchiridion" of Binsfeld. The present translation has been made from the text of the Latin edition of the works of the saint, entitled "S. Francisi Borgiæ, S. Jesu tertii Præpositi Generalis, excellentissimi quondam Gandiæ Ducis, Opera omnia quæ nunc extant aut inveniri poterunt. Bruxellis: apud Franciscum Foppens, A.D. 1675." The translator has added

occasional notes pointing out instances of similar teaching in other writers of authority.

In the second place will be found a letter of St Francis of Sales on preaching, addressed to Mgr Andrew Fremiot, Archbishop of Bourges, October 5, 1604. In it the saint, himself an experienced and successful preacher, takes, so to say, a young preacher by the hand and shows him how to collect matter, how to form a plan, and how to deliver a sermon. The present translation has been made from the French text as found in the edition of "Epítres Spirituelles de Saint François de Sales: recueillies par Messire Louis de Sales, Prévost de l'Eglise de Genève, vol. I, Paris, 1676."

Following this letter is an outline of the Method of preaching adopted in the Congregation of the Mission. It was drawn up by M. Almeras, first successor of St Vincent de Paul, and embodies the method of preaching recommended by the saint. It is substantially in agreement with the principles taught by St Francis of Sales.

In the next place comes a letter of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars on preaching, addressed by order of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII to the Bishops and Heads of religious orders in Italy, July 31, 1894. Though addressed to the Ordinaries of a particular country, the principles laid down in it regarding preaching

are of universal application. The translation has been made from the text as found in the "Acta Sanctæ Sedis," vol. XXVII, 1894-95, pp. 162-176.

Next in order is placed a treatise of St Augustine, "De Catechizandis Rudibus." In this treatise the saint teaches how converts are to be received and instructed, and how a repugnance to the duty of imparting elementary religious instruction is to be overcome. He also gives two models of a discourse to persons seeking admission into the Church. Though not a catechetical work in the modern sense, the treatise "De Catechizandis Rudibus" shows how complete and how practical was the instruction imparted to converts in the fourth century. They were taught the history and development of religion, and were instructed not only how to lead a virtuous life, but also how to meet the temptations which the existence of evil in the world or of scandals in the Church might suggest. It does not, however, contain the fuller instruction given to catechumens to prepare them for baptism, nor that which was given after baptism in preparation for the Blessed Eucharist. Models of such instructions may be seen in the catecheses of St Cyril of Jerusalem and amongst the sermons of St Augustine. The translator has followed the text of the Benedictine edition of St Augustine's works, Paris, 1696.

In the last place will be found a letter or treatise of St Jerome, on the virtues of the clerical state, addressed to Nepotian. In the decretals of popes and in works on the virtues of the ecclesiastical state the sayings of St Jerome in this treatise are often referred to as rules of conduct.

The translation here given is taken from an old English version made in 1630, and entitled: "Certaine Selected Epistles of St Hierome; as also the Lives of St Paul, the first Hermit, of St Hilarion, the first Monke of Syria, and of St Malchus, written by the same Saint; Translated into English. Permissu superiorum. M.D.C.XXX." The copy in the College Library, though complete, contains no mention of the name of the translator nor of the place of printing. The present writer has carefully compared the translation with the Latin text in the Benedictine edition and in that of Migne. Except in one or two instances he has left the old translation, including the quotations from Scripture, untouched, and has merely modernized the spelling. With the exception of this treatise the present writer has made all the other translations.

The two treatises of St Augustine and of St Jerome are replete with instruction, and they present a vivid picture of the position of the Church in the Roman world at the close of the fourth century. The influence of the Church

was such that there was reason to fear that men might be led to profess Christianity by human motives. Ecclesiastics were the confidants of the faithful and sometimes gave hospitality to consuls. These treatises contain a no less vivid picture of a priest's dangers and a priest's work in the midst of such surroundings.

At the beginning of this volume, are given the decrees of the Council of Trent on preaching, together with some extracts from the statutes of Irish synods, showing how that duty was fulfilled in times of difficulty. At the end is given a list of authors who have treated of sacred eloquence, and of some works of reference which may be useful to young preachers.

PATRICK BOYLE, C.M.

Irish College, Paris,
March 17, 1902.

DECREES OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT ON PREACHING

Quia vero Christianæ reipublicæ non minus necessaria est prædicatio Evangelii quam lectio, et hoc est præcipuum episcoporum munus; statuit et decrevit eadem sancta synodus omnes episcopos, archiepiscopos, primates, et omnes alios ecclesiarum prælatos, teneri per seipsos, si legitime impediti non fuerint, ad prædicandum sanctum Jesu Christi Evangelium. Si vero contigerit episcopos et alios prædictos legitimo detineri impedimento, juxta formam generalis concilii viros idoneos assumere teneantur ad hujusmodi prædicationis officium salubriter exequendum. Si quis autem hoc adimplere contempersit, districtæ subjaceat ultioni. Archipresbyteri quoque plebani et quicumque parochiales vel alias curam animarum habentes ecclesias quocumque modo obtinent, per se, vel alios idoneos si legitime impediti fuerint, diebus saltem dominicis et festis solemnioribus, plebes sibi commissas, pro sua et earum capacitate, pascant salutaribus verbis; docendo quæ scire omnibus necessarium est ad salutem, annuntiandoque eis, cum brevitate et facilitate sermonis, vitia quæ eos declinare, et virtutes quas sectari oporteat, ut pœnam æternam evadere, et cœlestem gloriam consequi valeant.

Id vero si quis eorum præstare negligat, etiam si ab episcopi jurisdictione quavis ratione exemptum se esse prætenderet, ... provida pastoralis episcoporum sollicitudo non desit, ne illud impleatur: Parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis. Itaque ubi ab

episcopo moniti trium mensium spatio munere suo defuerint, per censuras ecclesiasticas seu alias, ad ipsius episcopi arbitrium, cogantur, ita ut etiam, si sic expedire visum fuerit, ex beneficiorum fructibus alteri, qui id præstet, honesta aliqua merces persolvatur donec principalis ipse resipiscens officium suum impleat.

Conc. Trid. Sess. V, Cap. II, *De Ref.*

Prædicationis munus, quod episcoporum præcipuum est, cupiens sancta synodus, quo frequentius possit ad fidelium salutem exerceri, canones alias super hoc editos sub fel. record. Paulo III aptius præsentium temporum usui accommodando, mandat: ut in ecclesia sua ipsi per se, aut, si legitime impediti fuerint, per eos quos ad prædicationis munus assumunt, in aliis autem ecclesiis per parochos, sive iis impeditis per alios ab episcopo, impensis eorum qui eas præstare vel tenentur vel solent, deputandos in civitate, aut in quacumque parte diœcesis censebunt expedire, saltem omnibus dominicis et solemnibus diebus festis, tempore autem jejuniorum Quadragesimæ et Adventus Domini, quotidie vel saltem tribus in hebdomada diebus, si ita oportere duxerint, sacras scripturas divinamque legem annuntient; et alias quotiescumque id opportune fieri posse judicaverint; moneatque episcopus populum diligenter teneri unumquemque parochiæ suæ interesse ubi commode id fieri potest, ad audiendum verbum Dei.

Sess. XXIV, Cap. IV, *De Ref.*

Decrees regarding the Explanation of Holy Mass, of the Sacraments and Catechism

Etsi missa magnam contineat populi fidelis eruditionem, non tamen expedire visum est patribus, ut vulgari passim lingua celebraretur. Quamobrem, retento ubique cujusque Ecclesiæ antiquo et a sancta Romana Ecclesia,

omnium Ecclesiarum matre et magistra, probato ritu, ne oves Christi esuriant, neve parvuli panem petant, et non sit qui frangat eis, mandat sancta synodus pastoribus, et singulis curam animarum gerentibus, ut frequenter inter missarum celebrationem, vel per se vel per alios, ex iis quæ in missa leguntur aliquid exponant; atque inter cætera sanctissimi hujus sacrificii mysterium aliquod declarent, diebus præsertim dominicis et festis.

Sess. XXII, Cap. viii.

Ut fidelis populus ad suscipienda sacramenta majore cum reverentia atque animi devotione accedat, præcipit sancta synodus episcopis omnibus, ut non solum cum hæc per seipsos erunt populo administranda prius illorum vim et usum pro suscipientium captu explicent, sed etiam idem a singulis parochis pie prudenterque etiam lingua vernacula, si opus sit et commode fieri poterit, servari studeant, juxta formam a sancto synodo, in catechesi singulis sacramentis præscribendam; quam episcopi in vulgarem linguam fideliter verti atque a parochis omnibus populo exponi curabunt; necnon ut inter missarum solemnia, aut divinorum celebrationem, sacra eloquia et salutis monita eadem vernacula lingua singulis diebus festis vel solemnibus explanent; eadem in omnium cordibus, postpositis inutilibus quæstionibus, inserere atque eos in lege Domini erudire studeant.

Sess. XXIV, Cap. vii, *De Ref.*

Idem [episcopi] etiam, saltem dominicis et aliis festivis diebus, pueros in singulis parochiis fidei rudimenta et obedientiam erga Deum et parentes diligenter ab iis ad quos spectabit doceri curabunt; et si opus sit, etiam per censuras ecclesiasticas compellent, non obstantibus privilegiis et consuetudinibus. In reliquis ea quæ de prædicationis munere sub eodem Paulo III decreta fuerunt suum robur obtineant.

Sess. XXIV, Cap. iv, *De Ref.*

[illegible]

Insuper item, vel quo specie tales laborant, evulgare et tractare non permittant. Ita vero quæ ad conservationem quandam aut superstitionem spectant, vel [illegible] sapiant, tanquam scandala et fidelium offendicula, prohibeant.

Sess. XXV. De Purgat.

The following extracts from synodal statutes are of interest, as showing how the duty of preaching was inculcated in Ireland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

Statuimus ergo sæpenumero et ordinamus in singulis parochiis catechizent, exhortentur, aut commendent singulis diebus dominicis et festis solemnioribus, sub pœna quinque solidorum monetæ Angliæ, in pios usus per ordinarios respective convertendorum, vicarii quidem et hos pastores respective delinquentes, quod si ad decem septimanas continuas in hoc quisquam negligens fuerit, eo ipso beneficio privatus eo[illegible]

Præs. Synod. Armachan. an. 1660.

From Decret. c. XXV. Sess. Rituales, Decreta synodalia [illegible]

[illegible] parochi, juxta SS. Concilium Tridentinum et constitutiones [illegible] diebus dominicis et festis, inter missarum solemnia explicare divina eloquia, docendo necessaria ad salutem [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

datur; ei vero qui insufficiens fuerit ad id munus exercendum juxta idem concilium adjungat ordinarius idoneum sacerdotem, qui hoc munus tam necessarium adimpleat, illique congruam partem fructuum sive alimentorum parochiæ assignet.

Ex Synodo Armacano, *circa* 1687.

Statuimus et decernimus ut singuli sacerdotes nostri curam animarum habentes singulis diebus dominicis et festivis de præcepto populum sibi commissum, per se vel per alium sacerdotem a nobis approbatum, exhortentur et catechizent; cum autem nihil nobis antiquius sit quam ut verba salutis sæpissime proferantur, statuimus ut qui per tres successive dies festos vel dominicos hocce suum principale munus obire neglexerint, se noverint suspensos a missa celebranda extra fines suæ parochiæ, quamdiu nobis vel nostro vicario generali visum fuerit. Volumus etiam ut singulis diebus dominicis et festivis, lectio Catechismi, Anglico vel Hibernico, pro audientium captu, idiomate, populo exponatur.

Decree of the Synod of Cashel, a.d. 1782, Cap. x.

Quoties parochus e loco in locum suam intra parochiam transmigret, catechizet tota coram familia aliquos illius domus in qua pernoctabit, in oratione Dominica, Ecclesiæ præceptis ac Decalogi, et symbolo fidei; quod similiter, diebus dominicis et festivis coram populo facere tenentur.

Statutes of the Province of Tuam,

Parag. 23, a.d. 1631.

* See *Collections on Irish Church History*, Renehan, pp. 155, 478, 492.

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THE METHOD OF PREACHING

BY ST FRANCIS BORGIA

A Short Treatise on the Method of Preaching

By ST FRANCIS BORGIA

CHAPTER I

Introduction on the Duty of Preaching with Fear and Confidence in God

THEY who, by virtue of their office and by order of their superiors, desire to address the word of God to the people from the pulpit may justly say with the prophet: "Fear and trembling are come upon me"; * fear indeed on account of the greatness of the task, and trembling because it behoves me to examine myself well and to practise what I teach, lest I hear those threatening words, "Why dost thou declare My justices?" etc.† On the other hand, if I keep silence and bury the talent entrusted to me by the Lord, I have reason to fear and tremble lest one day those words may be applicable to me, "Woe is me because I have held my peace." ‡ For he is guilty of no small fault who refuses the breasts and the milk of doctrine to the children of God when they are hungry. They who commit that

* Ps. liv, 6. † Ps. xlix, 16. ‡ Isa. vi, 5.

crime are cruel as the sea-monsters of which the Lord thus speaks by the prophet Jeremias:* "Even the sea-monsters have drawn out the breast, they have given suck to their young; the daughter of my people is cruel like the ostrich in the desert." †

If I ascend the pulpit to preach, I fear lest I may have been negligent in preparation, and devoid of zeal for the honour of God and the salvation of the neighbour. I am afraid lest I sin through ambition or vain-glory, vices which are wont to beset a man who is vain and blinded by self-love.

To fulfil the office of a good Ecclesiastes or preacher the divine spirit and heavenly grace are needed. But what sort of dwelling am I for the Holy Ghost to abide in, seeing that my heart is a den of thieves, a nest of serpents and a cavern of demons? If Moses and Jeremias excused themselves before God and declined the office of ambassador ‡ because they acknowledged themselves to be unworthy and incompetent, stammerers and slow of speech; § if Isaias had need that his lips should be seared and purified with fire by an angel's hand ‖ before he announced the message from heaven; if the precursor of Christ,¶ though a man of most innocent life, and though he had practised penance from his childhood, retired into the wilderness that he might be

* Lam. iv, 3.

† St Gregory speaks thus of neglect of preaching: "Ex cujus ergo vitio prædicatori sermo subtrahatur non facile cognoscitur; quia vero pastoris taciturnitas aliquando sibi, semper autem subjectis, noceat certissime scitur."—St Gregory, *On the Gospels*, lib. i, Hom. 17.

‡ Exod. iv, 10. § Jer. i, 6. ‖ Isa. vi, 6. ¶ Luke i, 80.

the better fitted to point out there the Redeemer and the Lamb of God; * if, in fine, the Saviour Himself, before commencing to preach the gospel, willed to be first baptized in the Jordan, and that the heavens should be opened, and that the mission to teach given by His heavenly Father † in these words, "Hear ye Him," should be heard by all ‡—if He retired into the desert, fasted, combated and overcame the devil,§ how can I but fear, who have not withdrawn into the desert? how can I fail to tremble, who sit slothfully in the garden of the world and see not heaven, but rather hell opened by reason of my sins; who have not hearkened to the voice of the heavenly Father, but have rather given ear to the hissing of the demons, and instead of overcoming temptations have delivered myself up to be their captive?

Paul, the doctor of the Gentiles,‖ was cast to the ground and deprived of the sight of his eyes, that he might not behold the world; for God wills that the preacher of the gospel be humbled, and forbids him to look to the things of this world. And I, who am proud and lynx-eyed in worldly affairs and blind in those which are heavenly and eternal, with what countenance shall I ascend the chair of the saints and speak of that which I do not sufficiently understand? How shall I teach what I do not practise?

By means of such considerations let the preacher know himself, and, filled with shame at his own vileness, let him humble himself at the thought of the great office he bears. But let him

* Matt. iii, 13. † Luke iii, 22. ‡ Matt. xvii, 5.
§ Matt. iv, 1-11. ‖ Acts ix, 4.

beware of losing courage and becoming faint-hearted through fear, lest he be wanting in strength and vigour in teaching, correcting and reproving, and lose that freedom, authority and zeal which are indispensable in that office. Such fears, therefore, must be allayed and corrected by love and confidence in God; weakness must be strengthened and sadness dispelled by fortitude and the joy of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore let him call to mind how pleasing to the eyes of God and how gladsome to all the saints are the feet of them that preach the gospel. For the Holy Ghost speaks thus by the prophet: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, that bring glad tidings of good things."* Distrusting, therefore, the talent of knowledge, let him present himself before God and ask wisdom, grace, virtue and fortitude, and say with humility and truth: "Lord, there is no speech in my tongue,"† and, "O Lord, Thou wilt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise."‡ If Thou, O Lord, lendest Thine aid I will amend my life; I will lead my brethren by Thy paths, and the errors of my past life having been corrected will become a remedy and a medicine for them. "I will teach the unjust Thy ways, and the wicked shall be converted to Thee."§ And as Thou, O God, declarest that it is not meet to put the new wine of Thy gospel into old and broken bottles,‖ such as my soul is, do Thou renew and adorn it with Thy hand, lest that wine be lost in me, and my neighbour be deprived of Thy mercy. "Create a clean heart in

* Rom. x, 15; Isa. lii, 7. † Ps. cxxxviii, 4. ‡ Ps. l, 17.
§ Ps. l, 15. ‖ Matt. ix, 17.

me, O God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels."* And although, by reason of my vices, my hands are the hands of Esau, my voice shall then be the voice of Jacob, and treating of Thy wonderful works and Thy mercies I shall obtain Thy blessing for myself and for my brethren.

Animated with such confidence, go, preacher, gird on the sword, which is the word of God, and pray to the Holy Spirit that He may inspire thy words and penetrate the hearts of thy hearers, since He alone has the keys and opens when He wills, that, as the apostle says, "Speech may be given to you, that you may open your mouth with confidence to make known the mystery of the gospel for which you are an ambassador, so that therein you may make bold to speak according as you ought."† For you fulfil an embassy, either in virtue of the office you hold, or through obedience which imposes this duty upon you.

* Ps. l, 12. † Eph. vi, 19, 20.

CHAPTER II

On the Study requisite for Preaching

HAVING prepared himself by prayer and self-knowledge, let the preacher read the gospel he proposes to explain, having first made an examination of conscience before opening the book; for the dust of sin darkens the eyes of the spirit, so that it cannot "discern the precious from the vile," as, according to the prophet, it behoveth him to do who desires to speak as the mouthpiece of God.* After reading the gospel, let him study the explanation of it in the Fathers and ancient Doctors of the Church, as well as in such more recent authors as are best adapted to his capacity, and let him ask of God the spirit which He communicated to those holy men to aid them in explaining the gospel. For without that spirit the preacher will oftentimes speak coldly and produce no fruit in the hearts of his audience. He should diligently avoid using the expressions and phraseology of heretics.† Let him read the works of the Fathers

* Jer. xv, 19.

† The same advice is given by Tertullian: "Nobis etsi quærendum esset adhuc et semper, ubi tamen quæri oportet? apud hæreticos, ubi omnia extranea et adversaria sunt nostræ veritati, ad quos vetamur accedere? Quis servus cibaria ab extraneo, ne dicam ab inimico, domini sui sperat? Quis miles ab infœderatis, ne dicam ab hostibus, regibus donativum et stipendium captat, nisi plane desertor et transfuga et rebellis?

with attention, and let him not quote their sayings inconsiderately; for, though considering the circumstances of the time and the end for which they wrote they did not err, yet they said certain things which, had they lived at the present time, they would not have said. Neither must he quote their words for the purpose of impugning or refuting them; for this would derogate from the authority of the saints, and give offence to the people. He must rather, from a sense of humility, look on them as masters, follow their teaching, and rejoice that he is the instrument of their accidental glory by preaching with honour the doctrine which they taught, and which they committed to writing for the glory of God, for the spread of the gospel and for the salvation of souls. He shall avoid as full of danger the rash putting forward of his own opinions and ideas; rather let him willingly adopt the received interpretation of the Scripture, and regard it as the best method of interpretation to explain Scripture by other passages of Scripture, and to reconcile with each other the sayings of the Fathers.

Let him religiously follow the Vulgate text of the Bible, and adopt the interpretation of St Augustine, St Jerome, St Gregory, St Ambrose and St Chrysostom. Nor let him despise the Gloss * called the Interlinear, and Usual, nor

---

Nemo inde instrui potest unde destruitur. Nemo ab eo illuminatur a quo contenebratur. Quæramus ergo in nostro, et a nostris, et de nostro."—Tertullian, *Lib. de Præscriptionibus Hæreticorum* xii.

* The "Glossa Ordinaria," compiled by Walafrid Strabo in the ninth century, was held in high esteem throughout the middle ages. It consisted of extracts from the Latin and Greek Fathers, but chiefly from St Augustine, St Jerome, St Ambrose,

venture to interpret passages of the scripture until he understands them correctly.* He should reverence the Scripture as a sealed book, and should treat it with humility, having first had recourse to prayer and diligent study. Thus it shall come to pass that God will disclose what was hidden, and reveal what was, so to say, enveloped in darkness. For He is wont to reveal to little ones what He conceals from the wise of this world.† And what the curious and proud do not obtain is granted to the humble. When he has read the sacred interpreters, let the preacher diligently reflect and consider attentively, and arrange his matter. Let him look on his mind as a treasury and shrine, since he has, so to say, drawn riches from the treasures of God and of His servants the holy Fathers. Let him remember to deliver up the key of his heart to God and commend to Him the guardianship of

St Gregory and St Chrysostom. The Interlinear Gloss consisted of the explanation of words rather than of sentences, and was held in less repute than the Usual Gloss. Its author was Anselm of Laon, A.D. 1117. Commentaries now take the place occupied formerly by the Glosses. The following works may be mentioned as useful for the purpose referred to in the text: Cornelius à Lapide, "In Evangelia"; Maldonatus, S.J., "Commentarius in quatuor Evangelia"; "L'Évangile expliqué, défendu, médité," by the Abbé Dehaut; "Evangelia Dominicarum et Festorum totius anni Homileticis Explicationibus illustrata," by Father Schouppe, S.J.; "The Epistles and Gospels of the Sundays throughout the Year, with Notes critical and explanatory," by Rev. Daniel McCarthy, D.D.; "Commentarius in Evangelium S. Matthæi," by Van Steenkiste, etc.

* "Effectivement j'ai remarqué que ce qui manque le plus à certains orateurs, qui ont d'ailleurs beaucoup de talents, c'est le fonds de la science. Il faudrait que l'étude des bons livres fut longtemps son occupation principale."—Fénélon, *Dialogue on Eloquence I.*

† Matt. xi, 25.

it, as a casket of heavenly doctrine, that he may be able to say with the royal Prophet: "Thy words have I hidden in my heart that I may not sin against Thee." *

Being thus fortified, should you chance to be wounded by the demon, as sometimes happens through human frailty, be filled with confusion, and with humble repentance have recourse immediately to the sacrament of confession as to a refuge. Let the preacher also bear in mind that he carries a treasure in frail vessels, and that he should commend it to God, lest he be robbed of it by the demon and by vain-glory. It was thus, we are told, St Francis acted, saying to God from time to time: "O Lord, do Thou Thyself guard Thy treasures, for I know that I am a thief; else I shall either myself steal them or deliver them up to the enemy."

* Ps. cxviii, 11.

CHAPTER III

On Meditation before Preaching

LET not the preacher think it enough to read, to study and commit his subject to memory, but let him call to mind the example of the prophet Elias, who, when he had prepared what was necessary for the sacrifice, prayed to God to send down fire from heaven to consume the victim. "Then the fire of the Lord," says the Scripture, "fell and consumed the holocaust, and the wood and the stones."* Let him also pray, and beseech the Lord with Jeremias: "From above He hath sent fire into my bones, and hath chastised me." †

Let him be assured that without this fire‡ the food (of the word of God) will remain crude, insipid and indigestible. Now this fire is wont to be obtained by prayer and meditation, as he experienced who said, "In my meditation a fire shall flame out."§ By the help of meditation let the preacher deduce, from the gospel he is about to explain, the attributes of God, such as

* 3 Kings xviii, 38. † Lam. i, 13.

‡ "Caveant (ordinarii) hujusmodi adeo sanctum ministerium ulli concedere qui nec sincera Christiana pietate præditus, nec fervido in Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum amore incensus sit, sine quo aliud profecto non esset orator nisi aut æs sonans, aut cymbalum tinniens (1 Cor.)."—*Encyc. of the Cong. of Bishops and Regulars on Preaching,* July 31, 1894.

§ Ps. xxxviii, 4.

His power in miracles, His wisdom in precepts and counsels, His goodness in instances of mercy. Let him also draw from it lessons of the virtues of faith, hope, charity, humility, patience, fortitude, chastity and the rest. By experience he will learn that there is no passage of the gospel from which a spiritual man may not easily gather such excellent lessons of virtue. Let him weigh the sentences and words, and consider by whom they were uttered, to whom they were addressed, for what purpose, at what time, and on what occasion they were spoken. For in all these he will find mysteries, if God give him the key of the knowledge of the Scriptures. For the eternal God, "who first spoke by the prophets, hath since spoken to us by His Son." * And His discourse in the gospels is not silent, but speaks with eloquence to such as have ears to hear.

Let him imagine himself present at the discourses delivered by Christ, and let him vividly interpret them to his audience by voice rather than by gesture. Let him note the menaces to inspire fear, and the mercies and benefits of God to excite love. For, as fear deters the soul from vice, so love attracts it to virtue. Let the preacher excite in himself the sentiments which he desires to impress on the minds of his hearers; for he who is not himself first moved, softened and inflamed, cannot move others. Hence a certain author says: "Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi." †

It will be encouraging to the preacher to con-

* Heb. i, 1, 2. † Hor. *Ars Poet.*

sider Christ our Lord as He preached.* Let him also bear in mind that Christ, as man, offered Himself for His hearers. Let him hope, therefore, that discourses delivered under such patronage, and after such preparation, will produce much fruit. Let him offer them to God as the Son did, and pray the true Physician of infirm souls to impart healing to the audience according as He knows it to be needful for them. Let him also beg of the Physician that the bread of doctrine which, in his poverty, he brings to the pulpit may be multiplied in his hands and distributed to the multitude.† Unless this be done, neither he who plants nor he who waters will produce any increase. On the contrary, preaching will prove hurtful to the preacher, just as the unskilled physician injures the patient if through ignorance or negligence he administers medicine amiss. At the conclusion of his meditation let him consider the sorrow with which an offended God is touched,‡ as well as the zeal with which he himself ought to be inflamed in order to be prepared to die for

* The editions of Paris, 1640, and Rouen, 1641, have a slightly different reading: "Consolationi erit futuro concionatori in laboribus et vigiliis considerare Christum Dominum cum illa verba quæ interpretanda suscepit diceret, Patrem in verbo spectasse et, quasi jam coram esset prædicaturus, quaque attentione auscultarent auditores."

† The same idea of preaching compared to the multiplication of the loaves, is found in St Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana,* lib. i, 1: "Sicut ergo ille panis dum frangeretur accrevit, sic ea quæ ad hoc opus aggrediendum jam Dominus præbuit, cum dispensari cæperint eo ipso suggerente multiplicabuntur, ut in ipso hoc nostro ministerio, non solum nullam patiamur inopiam, sed de mirabili etiam abundantia gaudeamus."

‡ Gen. vi, 6.

the love of God and the salvation of souls. And if he perceives that he has made progress in these sentiments, it will be a proof that the meditation has been profitable to his soul, like the book spoken of in the Apocalypse of St John, which made the belly bitter, though in the mouth it was sweet as honey.* Let him be assured that the more tears he sheds, the better he will be able to make the people taste the bitterness of myrrh. At last the Lord will grant him the light of spiritual intelligence, for it is written, "The declaration of Thy words giveth light, and giveth understanding to little ones,"† provided he receive it with humility and thanksgiving, and acknowledge it to be a gratuitous gift, due to no merit of his own.

And though he should receive no other advantage from reading before meditation, let him be satisfied with this, remembering that it is a grace and a gift from God. Let him also be assured that, if he uses this grace well, he will receive others still greater. Moreover, let him remember that a teacher is not wont to give a second lesson to his pupil until the first has been learnt. In fine, if the preacher knows how to humble himself when he receives nothing, it will be no small advantage to him.

* Apoc. x, 9. † Ps. cxviii, 130.

CHAPTER IV

On the Arrangement of the Discourse

THE preacher must needs arrange in order what he has read and reflected on: order will serve as a memorandum. How much order and arrangement helps memory cannot be expressed, for if the preacher collects and brings with him to the pulpit a large supply of crude and undigested matter, he will speak in a confused and disordered manner, and will tire his hearers without benefiting them. Either the hearer will not understand what is said, or he will not remember it; and in consequence of want of arrangement of the matter the speaker will neither produce conviction nor move the will. In the creation of the universe and in the construction of buildings order is manifest. That by means of preaching the Holy Ghost may dwell in the hearts of the faithful,* God (as we picture it to ourselves) created matter devoid of form,† and next light and the other things which beautify and adorn matter, until at last He came to the creation of man, and placed everything in

* The sentence, "Ut mediis concionibus Spiritus sanctus in cordibus habitet fidelium," stands apart in most editions. In the Paris edition it is connected with the following sentence, as we give it above.

† Gen. i.

its proper place. It is thus in my opinion the preacher ought to act. First let him choose a text, and draw from it the subject and the matter of the doctrine he desires to inculcate; next let him seek out what the holy Fathers have taught concerning it, and, after reflecting on the gospel, let him arrange his matter in good order, and follow out a plan; let him put everything in its proper place so as to satisfy the intellect; moreover, let him have in readiness many commonplaces, a supply of texts, authorities, proofs from reason, metaphors, tropes, figures, examples from sacred Scripture, facts from history and similes.* Of such many collections have, as we are aware, been made and published in our own time, but each one will find most useful what he has collected by his own industry and study.

Let him take care, however, not to bring forward anything which is not to the point, and let him know that those things which in their proper place are pleasing and useful, are neither useful nor persuasive when out of place. Passages from

* St Alphonsus gives similar advice regarding the collection and arrangement of matter. "The manner of choosing matter for a sermon should be the following: Having selected a subject, write down on a sheet of paper the sentiments, motives, similitudes and examples which you found in your reading. Then read over the whole, and see to how many points the sermon may be reduced. Next write on a separate sheet the points you have discovered, putting a heading on each. Then note again the matters that bear on each point, and mark them with a number. When you perceive that you possess sufficient matter, then arrange in order the authorities, reasons and moral reflections giving each its own place. Then commence to develop the discourse."—St Alphonsus, *Instructions for Missions*, ch. vii, sec. i, On Preaching, Œuvres Complètes, vol. XV, (Paris 1834.)

the prophets, when rightly explained, are instructive, and move to admiration, especially where God expostulates with man; and those prophecies move powerfully which we see fulfilled in the law of grace.

Sometimes it will be useful to explain the gospel of the day, in order and word for word, drawing from it moral reflections as it proceeds; and this is a point to which the preacher's efforts should be especially directed. But at other times, after having given a general explanation, it will be preferable to take some sentence or maxim of the gospel, which, when clearly explained, will furnish copious matter for development. But in this the variety is as great as is that of minds, for not only what pleases one displeases another, but even it sometimes happens that what pleases one to-day will displease him to-morrow, and what pleased to-day during composition will be rejected next day.

To write * the sermon in full is characteristic of a man who is prudent and who guards against danger, and it is of advantage for future years. But some have one method of writing, and others another. Some make a compendium of what they purpose to say, and note down the principal

* With reference to writing Cicero speaks as follows: "But the chief point of all is that which, to say the truth, we hardly ever practise, for it requires great labour, which most of us avoid: I mean to write as much as possible. Writing is said to be the best and most excellent modeller and teacher of oratory, and not without reason, for if what is meditated and considered easily surpasses sudden and extemporary speech, a constant aud diligent habit of writing will surely be of more effect than meditation and consideration itself."—Cicero, *De Oratore,* lib. i, ch. xxxiii, Bohn's Classical Library.

headings; others write out in full the whole discourse on three or four sheets, and do not venture to speak in public until they have written their discourse and committed it to memory. This method is laborious, and suitable for timid beginners, rather than for such as have experience in the art of preaching. And in truth to be tied down to written words seems to restrain the force or, as it is commonly called, the inspiration of the speaker, and to hinder him from having the courage to rebuke with freedom and to speak with vehemence when the Holy Ghost suggests. There are some who adopt a middle course, and of this I approve. In a summary and methodical way they note down on a single page what they are about to say.* They even select words appropriate to the subject and arrange all in order. Hence it happens that, when circumstances require it, they can more freely develop their discourse and give scope to their eloquence, and under the impulse of the moment arouse the feelings of the audience. And this method, in my opinion, is safe and in frequent use.

Care must be taken not to use phrases, modes of expression and words which are too affected; for such expressions render the mind of the speaker and the hearer dry.† On the other hand,

* "Scribendum certe nunquam est magis, quam cum multa dicemus ex tempore. . . . Plerumque autem multa agentibus accidit ut maxime necessaria et utique initia scribant. Quod fecisse M. Tullium commentariis ipsius apparet."—Quintilian, *De Instit. Orat.* lib. x, c. 7.

† According to St Augustine, of all speakers preachers should use the clearest and simplest style, since custom does not permit the audience to interrupt them and ask for an explanation. Fénélon, *Dialogue on Eloquence III.*—See also

words which are vulgar, rustic, barbarous and obsolete, should be avoided. Let the style be such that no reasonable person may easily find fault with it.

When the discourse has been written, let the preacher repeat it some times before appearing in public, not only to fix it in his memory, but also to deliver it with suitable words, gesture and action, especially if by nature or art he be not gifted with great eloquence and have not practice in speaking.

There are some who make use of a local and artificial memory, by means of images, as they have learned from the orators;* but I have often seen this to be a hindrance rather than a help. Here also it will be useful to follow a middle course; for instance, to put marks at six or eight places in the written discourse by means of crosses, letters or numbers, and to impress these on the memory and trust to them; so that if perchance one forgets while speaking, as sometimes happens, what he had prepared to say, or becomes confused in the delivery of his discourse, he may cling to these marks as to an anchor.

The fitting time for committing a discourse to memory is to learn it accurately in the evening

St Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana,* lib. iv, 10: "Qui ergo docet, vitabit omnia verba quæ non docent. Et si pro eis alia integra quæ intelligantur potest dicere, id magis eligat. Si autem non potest, sive quia non sunt, sive quia in præsentia non occurrunt, utetur etiam verbis minus integris, dum tamen res ipsa doceatur atque discatur integre. . . . Ubi autem omnes tacent ut unus audiatur, et in eum intenta ora convertunt, ibi ut requirat quisque, quod non intellexerit, nec moris est nec decoris, ac per hoc debet maxime tacenti subvenire cura dicentis."

* See Quintilian, *De Instit. Orator.,* lib. xi, c. 2.

of the day preceding the delivery before going to sleep, so that on awakening from sleep the ideas impressed on the mind may present themselves. On rising the preacher should require from his memory what he had the day before entrusted to it. He may also make his meditation in the morning on the subject on which he is about to preach, to convince himself of what he endeavours in his sermon to convince others. For a man more easily succeeds in gaining others to his own opinion if he is first convinced of what he endeavours to convince others.

Nor is less care to be taken as to what is to be left unsaid than as to what it seems proper to say. In questions which are disputed and of importance let him, therefore, weigh his words, that no expression opposed to scholastic theology may imprudently escape him. And if it should chance through human frailty, as is sometimes the case, that he imprudently lets fall some word or expression capable of bearing an erroneous sense and having a dangerous sound, he must immediately explain it before proceeding farther, lest any scandal or bad impression be left on the minds of the audience, as though the preacher entertained erroneous sentiments regarding religion; for, as the prophet speaks: "The words of the Lord are pure words." *

* Ps. xi, 7.

CHAPTER V

How the Preacher should prepare himself in order to benefit others

In order to nourish her child with milk a mother first nourishes herself, and takes care of her own health, and she minces the solid food she puts into her infant's mouth. In the same way, in order to give spiritual food to the people who are to him as children, the preacher must mince the food that so he may put it into the mouth of the child. Wherefore let him offer the holy sacrifice with piety; let him pray, fast, watch, shed tears, discipline himself with scourges, and subject and subdue the body to the spirit. Thus it will come to pass that the sins by which many are possessed, as by demons, will be more quickly cast out, for as Christ has said: "This kind [of demon] is not cast out, but by prayer and fasting." *

In praying to God let him imitate the example of the same Lord, who, when he was hastening to His heavenly Father, prayed thus: "Father, while I was with them, I kept them in Thy name; keep them in Thy name," etc.† Let him use these petitions as commendatory letters which He left us on His departure from the

* Matt. xvii, 20. † John xvii, 11-12.

world, and God the Father will, without doubt, graciously receive them.*

Let him implore also the help of the angels. Let him ask of the seraphs love, of the cherubs knowledge and light, of the other hierarchies the gifts which correspond with their names. But especially let him pray to the guardian angels of his audience that power may be given him to teach those who are committed to their care. Let him blush at venturing to teach those who have obtained such masters and guardians. If the teaching of the angels has been fruitless how will yours avail, since you are unskilled and a sinner? Ask also that by their inspirations they may supply what is wanting in you, either from ignorance or negligence, and, in fine, that you may not hear from your own angel those words: "Physician, heal thyself."† Keep the law which you lay down, do first yourself what you command others to do. Thus you will derive some spiritual profit from your sermons. Endeavour, therefore, to perform the office of a good master by doing what you teach, like

* St Augustine in the following terms recommends preachers to pray: "Agat itaque noster ille eloquens, cum et justa et sancta et bona dicit; neque enim alia debet dicere; agat ergo quantum potest cum ista dicat, ut intelligenter, ut libenter, ut obedienter audiatur; et hæc se posse, si potuerit, et in quantum potuerit, pietate magis orationum quam oratorum facultate, non dubitet ut, orando pro se ac pro illis quos est allocuturus, sit orator antequam dictor."—S. Aug. *De Doctr. Christ.* lib. iv, 15. "Si enim regina oravit Hester, pro suæ gentis temporaria salute locutura apud regem, ut in os ejus Deus congruum sermonem daret, quanto magis orare debet, ut tale munus accipiat, qui pro æterna hominum salute in verbo et doctrina laborat!"—Ibid., lib. iv, c. 30.

† Luke iv, 23.

that heavenly Teacher who "began to do and to teach." *

When you earnestly desire to inculcate any virtue, implore the aid of the saint who excelled in it while on earth. For instance, when speaking of patience, commend yourself to holy Job; when treating of penance, invoke Magdalene; of continence and chastity, invoke Joseph; of charity, invoke that disciple whom Jesus loved; that by their intercession you may obtain their virtues, and that by the mercy of God and through their merits the people may "hear the word of God and keep it." †

But since ambition is wont to assail preachers—and would that it did not overcome them—especially if there be a great concourse of hearers, let the preacher arm himself and fight against that enemy which, like a viper, is wont as it were to instil its poison into the blood, and even into the very heart. For that evil let this be the remedy: when about to ascend the pulpit, let him be filled with shame and confusion, as though he were proceeding to make a recantation and were ordered to retract what he had said. For, in truth, if one weighs the matter well, this is what one does when he praises and commends virtue; he retracts and withdraws what he did when he shamefully sinned and offended God so often. Let him, therefore, accuse and condemn himself and his works; let him become crier and executioner in his own case. Since this is the case in making a public recantation and retraction, why, O wretched ashes, art thou proud? ‡ in condemning thy own life why art thou puffed up?

* Acts i, 1. † Luke xi, 28. ‡ Ecclus x, 9.

For three days before the sermon make it a practice to honour the three persons of the Trinity: on the first day commend your memory to God the Father; on the second your understanding to God the Son; on the third offer your will to the Holy Ghost. If anything escapes your memory invoke your heavenly Father; if you are engaged in investigating the explanation of any difficulty or mystery of holy Scripture, have recourse to the Son; if you feel dry and without devotion, invoke the Holy Ghost, that He may enkindle the fire of His love in your heart; that so all the powers of your soul may be as an instrument acceptable to God, and that you may use them well to praise and glorify Him.

CHAPTER VI

What the Preacher ought to do when about to ascend the Pulpit

When about to ascend the pulpit the preacher should first attend to purity of soul and examine and purify his conscience, as though he were obliged immediately after the sermon to appear before the tribunal and just judgement of God to render a rigorous account of his soul. Wherefore let him call to mind that Jesus Christ ascended the pulpit of the cross to die upon it; that in like manner the apostle St Andrew preached from the cross, and extolled it with wonderful praises, and expired upon it. So he who is now a true preacher of Christ crucified should stand in the pulpit prepared to endure torments, and even death, in testimony and in defence of the word of God, which he preaches, and of the Roman Catholic Church, our mother and mistress.

Let the preacher also regard himself as an engine of war or a piece of artillery, by means of which God desires to shake and overturn as with a battering-ram the proud walls of Babylon. But let him also consider that he is like powder, gross, heavy, cold; that like it he is black, unclean, fetid, and apt to defile those who touch it; and as powder to attain its end

requires the application of fire, so the fire of the Holy Ghost must be applied to him, as formerly on the day of Pentecost it inflamed the hearts of the apostles by descending on them in tongues of fire. In order to obtain that gift of light and fervour let him recite humbly and confidently the hymn:

Veni Creator Spiritus;
Mentes tuorum visita;
Imple superna gratia
Quæ tu creasti pectora. Etc.

CHAPTER VII

How the Preacher ought to comport himself in the Pulpit

When in the pulpit the preacher must not be disturbed in mind, nor lose heart if he sees that but few have assembled to hear the sermon; rather he ought to wonder that there exists even one person who does not decline to listen to him. Let him bear in mind that his merit will be none the less though few have come to hear him, and that this circumstance will add to his merit, inasmuch as it hinders his being influenced by vain-glory. Let him, therefore, set before himself Christ, a most excellent Master and heavenly Teacher, who was not ashamed to preach at one time to a few disciples,* and again to one woman of humble rank, though He was exhausted with great labour and the fatigue of a long journey.†

Let him also be prepared to cease speaking as soon as the signal is given by his companion, though he has hardly delivered half of what he had prepared to say; for it is better to be silent through obedience than without it to speak eloquently. It would however be prudent to limit the discourse so that it may be delivered within an hour, and it should not exceed that time, for if the preacher goes beyond an hour

* Matt. xvii, 18. † John iv, 6-26.

the hearer is not benefited; on the contrary, he is wearied and conceives disgust for what he has heard.*

The gestures and motions of the body ought to be decorous and in keeping with the person and office of the preacher, and in harmony with the subject of the discourse.† Care should be taken not to be excessive in gesture, so as to appear like an actor on the stage; and on the other hand not to be so quiet and motionless as to seem a statue and not a man. The preacher should bear in mind that according to Demosthenes gesture and delivery are the chief characteristics of an orator, and as it were the soul of oratory.

In the narration of facts prolixity is to be avoided, for it begets weariness and wastes time, which should be devoted to imparting instruction to the people.‡

* St Francis of Sales recommends that the sermon should not exceed half an hour. See his Letter on Preaching.—Mgr Dupanloup speaks thus on the same point: "À l'exception des grands sermons, dans de rares occasions une demi-heure suffit largement: au delà l'auditoire se fatigue et n'écoute pas, la vie n'y est plus. D'ailleurs que de choses ne peut-on pas dire dans une demi-heure, quand on sait serrer sa parole, et éviter les inutilités."—Mgr Dupanloup's *Entretiens sur la Prédication populaire,* p. 37.

† Sicut est enim quædam eloquentia quæ magis ætatem juvenilem decet, et quæ senilem, nec jam dicenda est eloquentia si personæ non congruat eloquentis. Ita est quædam quæ viros summa auctoritate dignissimos planeque divinos decet.—S. Aug. *De Doct. Christ.,* lib. iv, 6.

‡ La plus essentielle qualité d'un prédicateur est d'être instructif, mais il faut être bien instruit pour instruire les autres: d'un côté il faut entendre parfaitement toute la force des expressions de l'écriture, de l'autre il faut connaître précisément la portée des esprits auxquels on parle.—Fénélon, *Dialogue on Eloquence III.*

When reproving sinners the preacher should imagine that he is reproving himself. For he ought to consider himself as the greatest of sinners. And this will be very easy to accomplish; for of no one, much less of the audience present, does he know so many faults as he is conscious to himself to have committed. In teaching thus and benefiting his audience, he himself shall not be without a share in the fruit.

Let him not be loth to preach the opinions and remarkable sayings of others, though they be his equals and contemporaries, after the example of Christ, who, though He was the Wisdom of the Father, was not ashamed to preach what the precursor St John had before Him preached in the desert concerning penance. From this example the preacher should learn that the people ought often to be urged to penance, both in public discourses and in private exhortations; for, attracted as they are by the senses and by depraved customs, they rush to the delights and pleasures of the world. Let him bear in mind that God, by the mouth of Jeremias, calls those prophets false who do not preach penance. "Thy prophets," said he, "have seen false and foolish things for thee, and they have not laid open thy iniquity to excite thee to penance." *

Should any noise be made during the sermon, let him bear it patiently and not be disturbed or show anger,† lest while teaching

* Lament. ii, 14.

† "Qui enim locum prædicationis suscipit, mala inferre non debet sed tolerare, ut ex ipsa sua mansuetudine iram sævientium mitiget, et peccatorum vulnera ipse afflictionibus vulneratus sanet."—St Gregory, *On the Gospels,* Hom. 17.

others patience he refute himself, and show that he is wanting in that virtue. Let him call to mind that he himself was formerly a greater hindrance to others in hearing the word of God than are those who now create noise. If any observation be necessary to put a stop to the disturbance, let it be made modestly and without passion, so as to combine authority with humility. In reproving morals and vices let him use prudence and moderation; for if what is said gives offence, or if it be sharp and bitter, injury and harm will be the consequence rather than profit and amendment. It is the part of a prudent physician to gild his medicines that they may be the more easily received by the weak stomach, and though gilded they are salutary.* Fraternal correction should be given with such candour and charity that it may be evident that it proceeds from a mind which truly desires the salvation of him who is corrected. He must also show that he does not consider or brand any one as wicked, but that he desires to hinder the commission of such sins and to prevent any one from being wicked. He should so moderate his words that should any one suspect and take it ill that he was aimed at, he may be able to say with truth that what was said was not meant for a particular individual.

Fraternal correction may be mitigated and softened by bringing forward some passage or example from the holy Scriptures or from the

* As instances of prudence in giving correction, Nathan's admonition of David may be noted (2 Kings xii, 1-9), and the admonition addressed to the Jews by Jeremias.—Jer. xxxv, 1-15.

Fathers in which such vices are censured. Then since it is not the preacher, but the Holy Ghost who speaks, people cannot complain that they are hurt by his teaching. In fine, reproof should display compassion, and not indignation or hatred. The persons to be corrected should also be taken into consideration, for this is what St Paul teaches when he directs that ancient men be entreated as fathers, and old women as mothers.* In the matter of correction it is incredible how much the devil labours to mingle gall with the honey of the gospel, that by this means he may turn away many from hearing sermons, or excite odium and hatred against zealous preachers. If it be necessary for the salvation and preservation of the person to be corrected to uncover the wound and apply the cautery, the oil of sweetness should be added; for it was thus that God formerly dealt with the hard-hearted Pharoah, whom He afflicted with many plagues, and immediately withdrew the scourge to allow him time to return to himself and repent, and calmly correct his evil habits.

Should ideas present themselves to the preacher during the delivery of the discourse which had not occurred to him during preparation, he ought not to give utterance to them rashly, as they are immature. For the devil is wont often to suggest such ideas in order to disturb the preacher, and by the thought of something of no great importance to draw him away from the question at issue. But he may do so if he feels assured of the power and clearness of his own mind, and perceives that the idea bears on

* 1 Tim. v, 1, 2.

the subject, so that it may be a matter of scruple to pass it over. In that case he should immediately, through respect for the heavenly doctrine, return to what he had prepared, lest by too much self-confidence he be led into error.

Let not the preacher rashly and without reflection treat in the pulpit of heresies and errors opposed to Catholic doctrine, since those who are ignorant and unacquainted with them derive no profit thereby, and although such subjects may be lawfully spoken of, it is better not to touch on them. For we know that the craft of the devil exceeds the prudence and vigilance of man. Therefore it shall be the duty of a prudent preacher to give strong proofs of Catholic belief and to refute the falsehoods opposed to it in another way. For instance, when the opportunity presents itself he shall dwell on the obedience due to the Holy See; he shall defend by passages from Scripture and by arguments from reason the gift of virginity and the celibacy of the clergy; he shall enumerate the advantages of religious orders and of religious persons; he shall enlarge on the merit of good works and of penance; he shall exhort to obedience to princes, and to superiors, ecclesiastical and secular. In like manner he shall treat of the advantage of indulgences, both for the living and the dead, and shall recommend the utility of the intercession and invocation of the saints, as well as the respect due to their relics and their shrines.* And the prudent preacher shall with

* Fénélon gives similar advice: "Vous dites très-bien; car la véritable manière de prouver la religion est de la bien expliquer."—Fénélon, *Dialogue on Eloquence III.*

holy zeal so arrange these things that they who know the contrary errors may understand in what way they may be refuted, and they who are ignorant of them may be left in their simplicity, and may be consoled and have at hand a means of defence should they perchance be tempted internally or externally against faith. In provinces tainted with heresy there will be no need of this precaution; but the preacher may openly, yet with charity and sorrow, expose the deceits, blindness and errors of heretics. However, let him not attempt this in the pulpit until, with all the vigour of his talent and with all the force and energy of his learning, he has provided himself with weighty proofs, lest while he wishes to heal he may rather hurt by using weak arguments.

One ought also to avoid treating before an unlearned audience of the degrees of perfection and of sublime prayer and contemplation, for few will understand what is said, and many in the midst of such light will lose heart. For ordinary people, if they see they have not attained to the standard set before them, imagine they are in error, and that their good works are of no avail, and that what they have commenced is of little moment. Others again, being slaves of the flesh, will scoff at these things, and will not admit the sublimity of prayer and contemplation. Hence it comes to pass that the preacher runs the risk of becoming a prey to vain-glory and the hearer returns home dry and without profit. It is prudent therefore to adapt and limit the discourse to the capacity of the audience.*

* " Plebes sibi commissas pro sua et earum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis."—Conc. Trident. sess. V, cap. ii, de Ref.

He shall also avoid exaggerations and hyperboles and praises without limitation, and odious comparisons concerning the relative excellence of the saints; nor shall he praise the virtues and works of one saint, so as to put him before all others. For besides the fact that such exaggerations are unprofitable to the audience, they might, if closely examined, be difficult to sustain. It is safer to speak with candour and moderation. Nor is it enough to praise virtues and the saints, but the means ought to be pointed out whereby the audience may imitate* them, and care should be taken to direct attention to the thorns which render the path of eternal salvation difficult. Various and easy paths to virtue should be pointed out, for some will follow one path and others another.

The more he perceives that the people listen to him willingly, attentively, and in great numbers, the more boldly should he set forth the truth in necessary matters. Nor must he pass over vices and abuses in silence, remembering the example of our Saviour; for on the day on which He was received by the Jews with greatest honour, with applause and with branches in their hands, while they sang: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord"†—on that very day He cast the buyers and sellers out of the temple with great severity and with scourges.

He shall also take care not to exercise his office from motives of human respect, or advantage or gain, unless he wishes to take upon him-

* The Rouen edition has "viam qua ivitari."
† Matt. xxi, 9.

self the leprosy of sin which he has taken away from the people, as happened, we read, to the avaricious Giezi, who was struck with the leprosy which he had taken away from Naaman when converted by divine grace.*

*4 Kings v, 27.

CHAPTER VIII

What the Preacher ought to do after the Sermon

On returning to his room after delivering his discourse, the preacher should return thanks to God for having deigned to make use of him for an end so useful and a ministry so sublime. He should go over in his mind the mistakes he may have made in preaching, in order to humble himself for them and to avoid them on future occasions. Thus it will come to pass that he will be fortified against the praise and adulation of others and against self-love and vain-glory, which deceive and blindfold the mind by manifest falsehoods unless it be humble and submissive. And that he may humbly know himself and his own miseries and may escape flattery, let him say: "O great God, how often have I to-day pronounced sentence on myself! How different are my actions from my words! Though tepid and dainty myself, how severe I am in exhorting and in reproving others, how soft and mild towards myself! How easily do I pardon myself, while I do not pardon others! Behold how I make bold to treat of evangelical perfection, while by violating Thy commandments I am myself so far distant from it! Like the lion which with its tail effaces its footprints, I efface by my works and the tenor of my life the doctrine which I teach by my words."

Should your friends say that you preach with fruit, say with the humble Virgin Mary: "My soul doth magnify the Lord"*; and with the royal prophet: "I speak my words to the King."† For all things under heaven belong to the heavenly King, and to Him all glory is due. And this is the fruit of the seed which falls on the ground and dies, and produces fruit when He pleases and as much as He pleases. "But we are unprofitable servants,"‡ and when we have done that which we ought, we have not done enough. If on the other hand you hear that your sermons produce no fruit, let it be enough for you that you have fulfilled the duty laid upon you (and this is no small gain); and say: "O God, though I am not sufficient for anything, at least by preaching Thy law to men I can be a witness and a herald of Thy divine will, that Thou mayest be justified in Thy words and mayest overcome when Thou art judged."§ Let it also be a consolation to reflect that, though the fruit be not visible to men, God is wont to perceive it oftentimes by moving hearts in secret: for He alone searches hearts and perceives that which is not visible to human eyes. Remember, too, that the apostles and disciples of Christ, when preaching the gospel throughout the world, in many instances influenced but few and produced but little fruit, for God willed that the fruit should be gathered after their death, when it had grown up as it were from a seed.

Should you hear, perchance, that complaints have been made concerning you, do not be dis-

* Luke i, 46. † Ps. xliv. 1. ‡ Luke xvii. 10. § Ps. l, 6.

turbed if you have given no cause for them; rather return thanks to God that you are censured and spoken ill of, as He was when He had preached, though He had merited all good things from the Jews on account of His doctrine and His healing the sick. And although others should not profit by your means, be assured that you yourself at least will profit. See how strongly you bind yourself to do what you teach. For if your conduct is opposed to your teaching, you shall be like whited sepulchres, white indeed and beautiful without but within full of dead men's bones.

By these and similar meditations the preacher must keep himself humble, and the more humble he is, the more fruit he shall produce and the more pleasing he shall be to God, who is the most perfect Master of evangelical preaching and the only Teacher of humble preachers; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be praise and glory for ever. Amen.

Praise be to God, to the most glorious Virgin Mary and to all the saints.

A LETTER ON PREACHING

BY ST FRANCIS OF SALES

A Letter on Preaching*

To a Prelate of the Church

By ST FRANCIS OF SALES

My Lord, nothing is impossible to love. I am but a poor and wretched preacher, yet love makes me give you advice concerning the proper method of preaching. I know not if it be the love you bear me that draws this water from a rock, or if it be that which I bear you which makes these roses spring from thorns. Allow me to use the word love. I speak as a Christian; and do not consider it strange that I promise you water and roses, for these epithets are appropriate to all Catholic doctrine, however ill expressed. I commence, and may God vouchsafe His co-operation.

Advice on the Method of Preaching

To proceed with order, I shall consider preaching in relation to its four causes: the efficient, the final, the material, and the formal cause; that is to say: who ought to preach, for what end he

* This letter is No. 31, vol. I, in the edition of the "Letters of St Francis," published in Paris in 1676. The prelate to whom it was addressed was Mgr Andrew Fremiot, Archbishop of Bourges, and brother of Madame de Chantal.

ought to preach, what he ought to preach, and the method in which he ought to preach.

I

Who ought to Preach

No one ought to preach unless he possesses these three qualifications, a good life, sound doctrine, and a legitimate mission.

I shall say nothing of mission or vocation. I shall only observe that bishops have not only the mission, but they are the ministerial sources of it: other preachers are but the rivulets. Preaching is their first and principal duty. They are reminded of it at their consecration.* In consecration they receive for this end a special grace, which they ought to render fruitful. In respect to this, St Paul exclaims: "Wo is to me, if I preach not the gospel."† It is, says the Council of Trent, the chief duty of bishops to preach.‡ This thought should give us courage; for God assists us in a special manner in this function; and it is marvellous what power the preaching of bishops possesses compared with that of other preachers. However abundant are the streams, one loves to drink at the fountain head.

With respect to learning, it should be competent; it is not necessary that it be eminent. St Francis was not learned, yet he was a great and a good preacher. In our own time the blessed Cardinal Borromeo possessed only a moderate

* The consecrating prelate says: "Accipe Evangelium; vade et prædica populo tibi commisso."—*Pontificale Rom.* de Ordinatione Episcopi.

† 1 Cor. ix, 16.

‡ *Conc. Trid.*, Sess. V., cap. ii, de Ref.

degree of learning, yet he performed wonders. I could mention many such instances. A celebrated literary man, Erasmus, has said that the best means of becoming learned is to teach; by preaching we become preachers. This much only will I say. A preacher always knows enough if he does not pretend to know more than he really knows. If we cannot preach in a fitting manner on the Trinity, let us pass it over. If we are not capable of explaining the "In principio"* of St John, let us omit it. Other more practical subjects are not wanting; we are not called on to do everything.

As to a virtuous life, it is required in the same degree as St Paul requires it in a bishop, and no farther. Hence we do not require to be more virtuous as preachers than as bishops. This point then is already settled: "Oportet," says St Paul, "episcopum esse irreprehensibilem." † But let me observe that a bishop and a preacher ought not only to be free from grave sin; he should also avoid certain venial sins, and even certain actions which are not sinful. Our own St Bernard has said: "Nugæ sæcularium sunt blasphemiæ clericorum." ‡ A layman may join in a game, hunt, go out to parties at night, and in all that there is no sin; but in a bishop or in a preacher, unless such actions are surrounded by a thousand circumstances which are not easily found united, they are scandals, and great scandals. People say: "What a good time they have! they enjoy themselves to their hearts'

* John i, 1. † 1 Tim. iii, 2.

‡ St Bernard, *de Consid.*, lib. ii, cap. 13: "Inter sæculares nugæ, nugæ sunt; in ore sacerdotum blasphemiæ sunt."

content." After that let a preacher go and preach to the people on mortification, and he will be laughed at. I do not say that one cannot join in some becoming amusement once or twice in a month by way of recreation; but it must be with circumspection. Hunting is altogether forbidden. I say the same of superfluous expenditure on banquets, on dress, on books. In laymen these things are superfluities; in bishops they are great sins. St Bernard says: "Clamant pauperes post nos: Nostrum est quod expenditis. Nobis crudeliter eripitur quicquid inaniter expenditur." * How shall we correct the lavishness of the world if we display our own? St Paul says: "Oportet episcopum esse hospitalem." † Hospitality does not consist in giving banquets, but in willingly receiving guests at a table such as a bishop ought to have. The Council of Trent says: "Oportet mensam episcoporum esse frugalem." ‡ I except certain occasions which prudence and charity can easily discern.

Moreover, one should never preach except when one has celebrated or is about to celebrate Mass. "It is incredible," says St Chrysostom, "how terrible to the demon is the mouth which has received the holy sacrament." This is true. One may then say with St Paul: "An experimentum quæritis ejus qui loquitur in me Christus?" § One has then much more confidence, fervour and light. "Quamdiu sum in mundo," says the Saviour, "lux sum mundi." ‖ It is

* St Bernard, *Tract. de Officio Episcop.*, cap. ii, sect. 7.
† 1 Tim. iii, 2. ‡ *Con. Trid.*, sess. XXV, cap. 1 de Ref.
§ 2 Cor. xiii, 3. ‖ John ix, 5.

certain that our Lord, being really within us, gives us light, for He is the Light. Thus it was the disciples at Emmaus, having communicated, had their eyes opened. But at least one should have confessed, according to what God said by David: "Peccatori autem dixit Deus: Quare tu enarras justitias meas, et assumis testimonium meum per os tuum?" * And St Paul says: "Castigo corpus meum et in servitutem redigo, ne cum aliis prædicaverim ipse reprobus efficiar." † But enough on this point.

II

On the End the Preacher should have in View

THE end is the chief cause of all things. It moves the agent to act; for every agent acts for an end and according to an end. The end is the measure of the matter and of the form. According as a man intends to build a large or a small house, he prepares his material and arranges the work. What end does the preacher seek in preaching? His end and intention ought to be to do what our Lord came on earth to do. Of this He Himself said: "Ego veni ut vitam habeant, et abundantius habeant." ‡ The end then of the preacher is that sinners, dead in sin, may live to justice; that the just who possess spiritual life may have it more abundantly by becoming more and more perfect; and as it was said to Jeremias: "Ut evellas et destruas" vices and sins; and "edifices et plantes" virtues and perfection. §

* Ps. xlix, 16. † 1 Cor. ix, 27. ‡ John x, 10.
§ Jer. i, 10.

When in the pulpit, therefore, the preacher should say in his heart: "Ego veni ut isti vitam habeant et abundantius habeant." ¶ Now to succeed in this aim and purpose, two things are requisite: to instruct and to persuade. To instruct as to virtues and vices; to cause the former to be loved and practised and the latter to be detested, resisted and avoided: in a word, to impart light to the understanding and fervour to the will. ¶ Wherefore on the day of Pentecost, which was the day of their episcopal consecration (for they had received that of the priesthood at the Last Supper), God sent down tongues of fire on the apostles, that they might understand that the tongue of a bishop should enlighten the intellect of his hearers and inflame their will.

I am aware that some add a third end, and say that a preacher should please. For my part I make a distinction, and I say that there is a pleasure which arises from instruction and persuasion: for who is so insensible as not to feel great pleasure in being well and holily instructed concerning the way that leads to heaven? Who does not experience great consolation in the love of God? As for this pleasure, it should be sought. But it is not distinct from instruction and persuasion: it is a consequence of it.

There is another kind of pleasure, which does not depend on instruction and persuasion, but is distinct from them and very often hinders them. It is a certain gratification of the ears arising from a certain elegance—secular, worldly and profane—of unusual turns, ornamental descriptions, words and phrases, but all the result of

artifice. As to this, I strongly and firmly maintain that a preacher ought not to aim at it. It should be left to secular orators, to charlatans, to flatterers who take delight in such things. They preach not Christ crucified, but themselves. "Non sectamur lenocinia rhetorum, sed veritates piscatorum." St Paul detests hearers "prurientes auribus,"* and consequently the preachers who desire to please them. This is pedantry. I do not desire that people should say after the sermon: "What a great orator! What a fine memory he has! How learned he is!" But I desire that they should say: "How beautiful penance is—how necessary! O God! how good and how just Thou art!" and the like. Or that the hearer, having his heart deeply touched, should only be able to testify to the success of the preacher by an amendment of life. "Ut vitam habeant, et abundantius habeant."

III

What the Preacher ought to Preach. Sources—The Sacred Scriptures. The Fathers. The Lives of the Saints. History, literature, comparisons

St Paul states in one word to his disciple Timothy what should be the matter of preaching. "Prædica verbum: Preach the word of God."† "Prædicate evangelium,"‡ says our Master. St Francis (whose festival we celebrate to-day)§ explains this by urging his brethren to preach on the virtues and vices, on

* 2 Tim. iv, 3. † 2 Tim. iv, 2. ‡ Mark xvi, 15.

§ October 4. This letter is dated October 5, but probably it was not finished in one day.

hell and heaven. For that purpose the holy Scripture contains sufficient matter. Nothing more is required.

Must we then not have recourse to the Doctors of the Church and to the writings of the Saints? In truth we must. But what else is the teaching of the Fathers of the Church but the Gospel explained and the holy Scripture expounded?

The difference between the holy Scripture and the teaching of the Fathers is like the difference between an almond whole and an almond broken which can be eaten by every one; or between a whole loaf and a loaf cut into pieces and distributed. On the contrary then, we must use them, for they have been the instruments by whom God has communicated to us the true meaning of His word.

But must we not use the lives of the saints? Good God! can there be anything so useful, anything so beautiful? But then, what else are the lives of the saints but the gospel reduced to practice? There is no more difference between the gospel and the lives of the saints than between music written and music sung.

And what of facts from profane history? They are good, but they are to be used as we use mushrooms—very moderately, and only to awaken an appetite. And even then they must be well seasoned, and, as St Jerome observes,* they must be treated as the Jews treated the captive women whom they desired to wed; † their nails must be pared and their hair shaven; that is to say, they

* Letter *Magno Oratori Romano.* † Deut. xxi, 12.

must be made to serve the gospel and true Christian virtue in every respect, and everything that is reprehensible in actions which are heathen or profane must be removed from them. It is necessary, as the Scripture says, "Separare pretiosum a vili."* In speaking of the valour of Cæsar, his ambition; in the case of Alexander, his vanity, haughtiness and pride; in the chastity of Lucretia, her death, caused by despair, must be excepted and condemned.

What is to be said of the fables of the poets? Oh, of these let there be nothing, or so little and so appropriate, and surrounded with so many circumstances as antidotes, that every one may perceive that we do not make profession of them, and let all this be done with the greatest possible brevity. Their verses, however, are useful. The ancients, however devout they were, have made use of them, even down to St Bernard; and where he learned them I know not. St Paul was the first; he cited Aratus and Menander. But as for their fables, I have not met with them in any sermon of the ancients, with the exception of the fable of Ulysses and the Sirens in a sermon of St Ambrose. Therefore, I say of these, let there be nothing, or next to nothing.

And what of examples from natural history? By all means; for the world which was made by the Word of God bears the impress of that Word in all its parts. All its parts sing the praises of their Maker. It is a book which contains the word of God, but in a language which all do not

* Jer. xv, 19.

understand. They who by means of meditation understand it, do well to use it like St Anthony, who had no other library. And St Paul says: "Invisibilia Dei, per ea quæ facta sunt, intellecta conspiciuntur." * And David: "Cœli enarrant gloriam Dei." † This book is useful for similitudes, for comparisons "a minori ad majus," and for countless other things. The ancient Fathers and the holy Scripture abound in these in a thousand places—"Vade ad formicam," ‡ "Sicut gallina congregat pullos suos," § "Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum," ‖ "Quasi struthio in deserto," ¶ "Videte lilia agri,"** etc., and innumerable like instances.

But above all let a preacher be on his guard against relating false miracles, ridiculous stories, such as certain visions taken from authors of inferior rank, or matters which are unbecoming and apt to render our ministry deserving of blame and contempt.

Such is my opinion regarding the matter of preaching in general; it remains to speak in detail of the parts of the matter of a sermon.

Sacred Scripture: its Uses

THE first part of the matter is the texts from Scripture, which, in truth, hold the most important place, and form the foundation of the edifice; for in short we preach the word of God, and our teaching rests on authority. "Ipse dixit, Hæc dicit Dominus," said all the prophets; and our Lord Himself said, "Doctrina mea non est mea, sed ejus qui misit me." †† But it is necessary

* Rom. i, 20. † Ps. xviii, 2. ‡ Prov. vi, 6.
§ Matt. xxiii, 37. ‖ Ps. xli, 2. ¶ Lam. iv, 3.
** Matt. vi, 28. †† John vii, 16.

that as far as possible the texts be interpreted in a natural, clear and solid manner. Now the Scripture may be interpreted in one of four ways, as the ancients have remarked:

> Littera gesta docet, quod credis allegoria,
> Quid speres anagoge, quid agas tropologia.

The metre is not good, but there is rhyme, and still more there is reason.

As regards the literal sense, it must be sought in the commentaries of the learned. This is all that can be said, but it is the preacher's duty to dwell on the words and weigh their meaning and their force. Yesterday, for instance, I was explaining in this village the commandment, "Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, ex tota anima tua, ex tota mente tua.* Following St Bernard, I explained the passage thus: "Ex toto corde," that is, courageously, valiantly, fervently, because courage belongs to the heart; "ex tota anima," that is with affection, for the soul is the seat of the passions, and affections; "ex tota mente," that is, spiritually, discreetly, because the mind is the superior part of the soul, to which belong discernment and judgement, in order to have zeal according to knowledge and discretion.

Thus, too, the word "diligere" should be weighed, for it comes from "eligo" and represents naturally the literal sense, viz., that our heart, soul and mind, must make choice of God in preference to everything else, and this

* Deut. vi, 5. Matt. xxii, 37.

is the real love of appreciation, of which the theologians interpret these words.

When there is a diversity of opinion amongst the Fathers and Doctors, one should abstain from quoting opinions which require to be refuted, for one does not ascend the pulpit to dispute against the Fathers and Catholic Doctors; nor should we reveal the weak points of our masters, nor what escaped them through human frailty, "Ut sciant gentes quoniam homines sunt."* But it is allowable to quote several interpretations, praising them, and dwelling on them, one after another, as I did last Lent with reference to the six interpretations found in the Fathers of the words, "Dicite quia servi inutiles sumus,"† and of those other words, "Non est meum dare vobis";‡ for, if you remember, I drew very practical lessons from each of them; but I passed over in silence the interpretation of St Hilary, or if I did not I was wrong, and I should have passed it over, for it is not probable.

With respect to the allegorical sense, the preacher must observe four or five points. The first is not to deduce an allegorical sense which is too forced, as they do who allegorize everything; but the allegory should arise naturally from the literal sense, as St Paul draws an allegory of the Jews and Gentiles from Esau and Jacob, and from Sion or Jerusalem an allegory of the Church.

Secondly, when there is no great evidence that one thing is a figure of another, one of the passages should not be treated as a

* Ps. ix, 21. † Luke xvii, 10. ‡ Matt. xx, 23.

figure of the other, but should be used by way of comparison. For instance, the juniper under which Elias slept through weariness is by some interpreted allegorically of the cross; but I should prefer to say that, as Elias fell asleep under the juniper, so we should repose under the cross of our Lord by meditation. I would not say that Elias signifies a Christian and the juniper the cross. I would not affirm that the one is a figure of the other, but I would compare the one with the other, for thus the reasoning is stronger and less open to blame.

Thirdly, the allegory should be becoming. In this respect many are to blame who allegorize the prohibition given in Deuteronomy xxv: "Si habuerint inter se jurgium viri duo, et unus contra alterum rixari cœperit, volens uxor alterius eruere virum suum de manu fortioris, miseritque manum et apprehenderit verenda ejus; abscindes manum illius, nec flecteris super eam ulla misericordia." They say that the woman represents the evil which the synagogue did in reproaching the Gentiles with their origin, and their not being children of Abraham. That interpretation may have the appearance of truth, but it is wanting in becomingness, because the prohibition presents a dangerous image to the mind of the hearers.

Fourthly, the allegory should not be too long, for thereby it loses its gracefulness and has an air of affectation.

Fifthly, the application should be made with clearness and great judgement, and the correspondence of part with part should be skilfully brought out.

The same rules are to be observed with respect to the anagogical and tropological sense: the former of which refers the facts of Scripture to what shall take place in the future life, and the latter refers them to what takes place in the soul and the conscience. I shall give an example which will serve for each of the four senses. These words of God, referring to Esau and Jacob—"Duæ gentes sunt in utero tuo, et duo populi ex utero tuo dividentur; populusque populum superabit, et major serviet minori"*—in the literal sense are understood of the two nations which sprang from Esau and Jacob, according to the flesh, namely, the Idumeans and the Israelites; the lesser of whom, the Israelites, overcame the greater and elder, the Idumeans, in the time of David. Allegorically, Esau represents the Jewish people, who were the elder in the knowledge of salvation: for to the Jews the gospel was first preached. Jacob represents the Gentiles, who were the younger, and who nevertheless have at length prevailed over the Jews. Anagogically, Esau represents the body which is the elder, for the body was formed, both in the case of Adam and in our own, before the soul was created. Jacob signifies the soul, which is the younger. In the next life the soul shall prevail and rule over the body, which shall serve the soul entirely and without contradiction. Tropologically, Esau is self-love; Jacob is the love of God in our souls. Self-love is the elder, for it was born with us; the love of God is the younger, for it is acquired by the

* Gen. xxv, 23.

sacraments and by works of penance. Yet the love of God must prevail, and, when it resides in the soul, self-love serves as an inferior. Now these four senses supply copious, excellent and solid matter for preaching, and are very useful for the explanation of doctrine. Hence the preacher must make use of them, but with the limitations I laid down as requisite when treating of the allegorical sense.

The Fathers

NEXT to the texts of Scripture come the texts from the Fathers and the Councils; and in respect to these I will merely observe that, except in rare cases, the texts chosen should be short, pointed and strong. Preachers who cite long texts weaken their own ardour, and the attention of the greater part of the audience, and expose themselves to failure of memory. Short and forcible texts are such as the following from St Augustine: "Qui fecit te sine te, non salvabit te sine te"; "Qui pœnitentibus veniam promisit, tempus pœnitentiæ non promisit." In St Bernard there are many such texts. But after quoting them in Latin, it is necessary to repeat them in French,* and to dwell upon them, to paraphrase and apply them.

Arguments from Reason. Illustrations

NEXT come the arguments from reason, which a man of ingenious mind and good sense may make use of, and these are to be found in the works of the Doctors, and most of all in St

* i.e., in the vernacular.

Thomas; and if well developed they furnish excellent matter. If you purpose to speak on any subject, look to the table of reference in St Thomas. See where he treats of that subject; look at what he says, and you will find several reasons which will furnish you with matter; but withal such matter must not be used unless it be intelligible, at least to an ordinary audience.

Examples are very useful and render a sermon interesting; but they should be appropriate, well stated, and still better applied. Incidents which are interesting and striking should be selected and stated with clearness and distinctness and aptly applied, after the manner of the Fathers who propose the example of Abraham immolating his son to show that one ought to spare nothing in order to do the will of God. They dwell on everything that can render the obedience of Abraham noteworthy. Abraham, they remark, in his old age, though he had only one son—so comely, so wise, so virtuous, so amiable—yet, without objection, murmur or hesitation, conducts him to the mountain, and is prepared to immolate him with his own hands. And in truth they apply the example in a yet more lively manner. And you, O Christian, are so far from making up your mind to sacrifice—I do not say your son, your daughter, nor your property, nor a great portion of it, nor even a crown* for the love of God to relieve the poor, or a single hour of your recreation to serve God, a single little affection, etc.

* Écu, a coin.

But one should take care not to enter into useless and uninteresting descriptions after the manner of school-boys who, instead of narrating the fact simply and pointing out the lesson it contains, describe the beauty of Isaac, the sword of Abraham, the place of the sacrifice, and such-like trifling details. Yet the description ought not to be so brief that the example can make no impression, nor so long as to cause weariness. One should also avoid introducing dialogues between the persons mentioned in the example, unless they are taken from the words of the Scripture or are likely to have occurred: as, for instance, to represent Isaac weeping and imploring his father for mercy, or Abraham deliberating with himself and bewailing his lot. This would throw discredit on the courage and resolution of both. Hence they who by meditating have formed colloquies should, in preaching, observe two rules: the first is to consider whether the dialogues are based on apparent probability, and the second is not to make them too long, for this cools the ardour of the speaker and the hearer. The examples of the saints are admirable, especially those of the saints of the province where the sermon is preached: for instance, that of St Bernard at Dijon.

It remains for me to say a word respecting similitudes. They have a wonderful efficacy to enlighten the intellect and inflame the will. They may be taken from the actions of men, comparing them one with another: for instance, from the conduct of shepherds to infer what bishops and pastors ought to do, as our Lord

did in the parable of the lost sheep. They may be taken from natural history—from herbs, trees, animals; from philosophy and, in a word, from everything.

Similitudes from little things, if skilfully applied, are excellent, as our Lord applies the parable of the seed. Those which are taken from natural history, if interesting and well applied, have a two-fold lustre: for instance, the similitude of the eagle renewing its youth applied to penance.

Now there is in this a secret extremely useful to preachers, that is to take similitudes from certain passages of the Scripture where few can remark them; and this is done by reflecting on the words. Let us take an example. David, speaking of the worldly man, says: "Periit memoria eorum cum sonitu."* From this I draw two similitudes of two things which perish with a noise. When a glass is broken, in breaking it perishes with a noise. Thus the wicked perish. They are spoken of at the time of their death; but as the glass, when broken, is altogether useless, so those unhappy men remain lost for ever without hope of salvation. The other comparison is this: when a great and wealthy man dies all the bells are rung, a great funeral is celebrated; but when the bells have ceased to ring, who blesses him? who speaks of him? No one. St Paul, speaking of a man who has not charity and who performs certain good works, says: "Factus est sicut æs sonans, aut cymbalum tinniens."† From this text a comparison

* Ps. ix, 7. † 1 Cor. xiii, 1.

may be drawn of a bell which summons others to the church, but does not itself enter. For thus a man who is without charity performs good works, edifies others and urges them on towards heaven, but goes not himself thither.

To discover such similitudes one must consider the words and see whether they are metaphorical or not; for if they are, at once you have a similitude, if you will but observe it. Take for instance, "Viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri, cum dilatasti cor meum."* The words "dilatasti" and "cucurri" ought to be weighed, for they are metaphorical. Next you must see what are things which move more rapidly by means of dilatation, and you will find some such as ships when their sails are spread. Ships, then, which are becalmed in the harbour speed before the breeze as soon as the wind swells their sails. So with us; when the inspiration of the Holy Ghost enters our hearts we speed upon the sea of the commandments. And, in truth, whoever will pay attention to this will find many useful and interesting similitudes. But in the use of them he must observe becomingness and say nothing vulgar, low or unseemly.

Moreover, I wish you to observe that the Scripture may be used with much profit in an accommodated sense, though this be not its true sense. Thus St Francis used to say that alms are the "bread of angels," because the angels procure them by their inspirations, and he applies to them the passage: "Panem angelorum manducavit homo."† But herein discretion and moderation must be observed.

* Ps. cxviii. † Ps. lxxvii, 25.

IV

On the Arrangement of the Matter

METHOD should be observed above all things. There is nothing that helps the preacher more or renders his preaching more useful or more agreeable to the hearer.

I am of opinion that the plan should be clear, manifest, and by no means concealed, as some think, who imagine that it is an excellence to conceal their plan. Of what use, pray, is a plan if it is not seen and if the hearer does not know it?

1. PLAN OF SERMON ON A MYSTERY

To aid you herein I will observe that you purpose to preach either upon some fact of sacred history, on the Nativity, for instance, or the Resurrection or the Assumption, or on some text of the Scripture, such as "Omnis qui se exaltat humiliabitur,"* or on a whole gospel in which there are several texts, or on the life of a saint with a text.

When preaching on an historical incident one of the following methods may be adopted:

1. Consider how many persons take part in the incident on which you purpose to preach, and then make some reflections with reference to each of them. For instance, in the Resurrection I see the Marys, the angels, the guards at the sepulchre, and our sweet Saviour. In the Marys I perceive fervour and diligence; in the angels joy, and jubilation in their white garments and in their splendour; in the guards I see the weakness

* Luke xiv, 11.

of man devising vain things against God; in Jesus I perceive glory, triumph over death and the hope of our resurrection.

2. In a mystery one may take the principal circumstance as in the example just mentioned, the Resurrection, and then consider what preceded and what followed. The Resurrection is preceded by death, the descent into hell, the liberation of the fathers who were in Abraham's bosom, the fear of the Jews lest the body should be taken away; then the resurrection in a blessed and glorious body. What follows is the earthquake, the coming and apparition of the angels. All these points furnish admirable matter and in good order.

3. In every mystery one may consider the following points: "Who? Why? How?" As in the Resurrection: Who rises again? Our Lord. Why? For His glory and for our benefit. How? Glorious and immortal.

In the Nativity: Who is born? The Saviour. Why? To save us. How? As an infant, poor, naked, cold, in a stable.

4. Having given the historical narrative with a brief commentary, one may deduce from it three or four lessons. First, what we should learn from it for the edification of our faith; secondly, for the increase of our hope; thirdly, for the augmentation of our charity; fourthly, what it teaches for our imitation and practice.

In the example of the Resurrection, for our faith we see the omnipotence of God, a body passing through a stone, a body become immortal, impassible and altogether spiritual. How firmly then ought we to believe that in the

Blessed Sacrament that same body is not circumscribed by space, cannot be hurt by the breaking of the species, that it is there after the manner of a spirit, but yet really!

For hope: if Jesus Christ has risen, then we shall rise again, says St Paul; He has prepared the way for us.

For charity: though arisen, yet He remains on earth to instruct the Church, and for our advantage He delays to take possession of heaven, the appropriate abode of those who have arisen from the dead. Oh, what love!

For imitation: He rose again on the third day. O God! why do we not rise again by contrition, confession and satisfaction. He forces His way through a stone. Let us, too, overcome every difficulty.

2. Plan of a Sermon on a Text or on a Virtue

1. When you desire to preach on a text you must consider to what virtue it refers. For instance: "Qui se humiliat exaltabitur." Here the subject of humility is clearly indicated. But there are other texts where the subject is not so evident, such as: "Quomodo huc intrasti non habens vestem nuptialem?"* Here the subject is charity. But you see it enveloped in a garment; for the nuptial garment is charity. When you have discovered in the text you are about to explain the virtue to which it refers, you may form the plan of your sermon by considering in what the virtue consists: its marks, its effects,

* Matt. xxii, 12.

and the means to acquire or practise it. This has always been my plan; and I have been pleased to find the work of the Jesuit Father Rossignol in agreement with this method. Its title is "De Actionibus Virtutum"; it is printed at Venice, and will be useful to you.

2. There is another method, namely, to show how the virtue is upright, useful and agreeable or pleasant: these being the three classes of goods which men may desire.

3. Again, the subject may be treated in another way, by pointing out the advantages which the virtue brings and the evils which follow from the opposite vice. But the first method is best.

3. Plan of a Sermon of the Gospel

When you preach on a gospel in which there are many texts, you must consider what are those on which you purpose to dwell, and see what are the virtues they treat of; and speak of these succinctly, as I have already said when speaking of a single text. The others should be touched on by way of paraphrase. But this way of treating a whole gospel in which there are many texts is less profitable, inasmuch as the preacher, not being able to dwell long on any text, cannot develop them nor inculcate the lessons he desires.

4. Plan of a Panegyric of a Saint

The plan of a sermon on the life of a saint is different.

1. The plan I followed in the funeral oration of M. de Mercœur is a good one, for it is St Paul's, viz.: "Ut pie erga Deum, sobrie erga seipsum, juste erga proximum vixerit."

In this plan the saint's actions should be brought, each under its proper heading.

2. Or, again, you may consider what he did: "agendo," by his virtues; "patiendo," by his sufferings in martyrdom or by mortification; "orando," by his miracles.

3. Or one may examine how he combated the devil, the world and the flesh—pride, avarice and concupiscence—which is St John's division. "Omne," says he, "quod est in mundo, aut est concupiscentia carnis," etc.* Or, again, as I did in my sermon on St Bernard, at Fontaines, you may point out how we should honour God in the saint and the saint in God; how we should pray to God through the intercession of the saint; and in this way touch on the features of the saint's life, and put everything in its proper place.

Here then you have plans enough to make a beginning, for after a little practice you will make others of your own better than these. It remains for me to say, with reference to the method, that I should put the proofs from Scripture first, those from reason second, the comparisons third, and the examples in the fourth place, provided they are taken from sacred sources; for if they are profane they are not appropriate for the conclusion of a sermon. A sacred discourse should have a sacred conclusion.

Moreover, the method requires that from the commencement to the middle the discourse should have for object to impart instruction, and from the middle to the end to produce persuasion.

* 1 John ii, 16.

Therefore the motives to influence the feelings should be placed at the end.

But after all this I must tell you how to fill up the outline of your sermon. For instance, if you wish to preach on humility arrange your plan as follows :

1. In what this virtue consists.
2. Its marks.
3. Its effects.
4. The means to acquire it.

Such will be your arrangement. To fill up the plan, find out in the table of your works of reference the words, "Humilitas," "Humilis," "Superbus," "Superbia." See what they say on the subject, and when you find descriptions or definitions place them under the heading, "In what this virtue consists," and try to explain that point well by showing wherein consists the opposite vice.

To fill up the second point look in the reference table for "Humilitas sancta," "Humilitas indiscreta" and the like, and thereby you will perceive the difference between true and false humility. If there are examples of both, make use of them. Act in like manner for the two other points—intelligenti pauca.

The authors in whose works you will find matter of this kind are St Thomas, St Antoninus, Gulielmus Episcopus Lugdunenis in *Summa de Virtutibus et Vitiis*, the *Summa Prædicantium* of Philip Diez, and his sermons, Osorius, the spiritual works of Granada, Hylaret's sermons, Atilla on St Luke, the Jesuits Salmeron * and

* Alphonsus Salmeron, S.J. (1516-1585): *Questions et Dissertations sur les Évangiles,* 16 vols; Maurice Hylaret,

Barradas on the Gospels. Amongst the ancients St Gregory excels, likewise St Chrysostom and St Bernard.

But I must say that amongst all those who have written sermons Diez pleases me most. He sets about the subject in earnest; he has the spirit of a preacher; he impresses moral lessons and explains texts well; he abounds in beautiful allegories and comparisons and in nervous descriptions; he seizes the opportunities to speak with eloquence, and is very devotional and clear. He is wanting in a quality which Osorius * possesses, that is, order and method, for he observes none; yet it seems to me you ought to make use of him in the beginning. I say this not from having used him much myself, for I only became acquainted with his work at a late date, but because I know him to be such, and I think I am not mistaken. A Spanish author has written a large work entitled "Silva Allegoriarum," which is very useful if rightly used, as are also the "Concordances" of Benedicti.*

O.S.F. (1539-1591), *Homilies* (in Latin), 5 vols; Louis of Granada, O.P. (1504-1588), *Silva locorum communium divini Verbi Concionatoribus non minus utilis quam necessaria* (Lyons, 1582); Sebastian Barradas, S.J. (1535-1615), *Commentaria in Concordiam et Historiam quatuor Evangeliorum*, 4 vols; *Conciones* Joannis Osorii, S.J., in quinque tomos distinctæ, Paris, 1601.

* The following Concordances can be more readily procured at the present time: *Concordantiarum S. Scripturæ Manuale,* auctoribus PP. de Raze de Lachaud et Flandrin, S.J.; *Concordantiarum Universæ Scripturæ Sacræ Thesaurus,* auctoribus PP. Peultier, Étienne et Gantois, S.J., Paris, 1899. The following works may also be useful: *Bibliothèque des Prédicateurs,* par le R. P. Vincent Houdry, S.J., edit. 1753, 22 vol., edit. 1870, 8 vol.; *The Divine Armoury of the Scriptures,* by the Rev. Kenelm Vaughan. *Les contre-sens bibliques des Prédicateurs* par le R. P. Bainvel, S.J.

Such are the chief observations which occur to my mind in reference to the matter of a sermon.

V. Of the Form of Preaching; or, How to Preach

HERE I desire that you accept my word more than elsewhere, for I do not hold the common opinion, and yet what I say is but the very truth.

It is the form, says the Philosopher, which gives being and life to a thing. However admirable what you say may be, unless you say it well you have said nothing. Say a little and say it well, and you have said much. How then should a preacher speak?

He must guard against the "quanquams" * and the long periods of pedants, as well as their gestures, their airs and their attitudes. All that is the plague of preaching. Let the delivery be easy, dignified, expansive, natural, vigorous, edifying, grave and somewhat slow.

But to succeed in this what is required? It is necessary, in a word, to speak with feeling and with devotion, simply, candidly, and with confidence, and to be convinced of what you teach and what you inculcate. The great art is to have no artifice. Our words should be inflamed, not by cries or by unmeasured action, but by interior feeling. They should come from the heart rather than from the mouth. After all it is the

* "Quanquam" meant the formal introduction to a philosophical or theological thesis. — *Dictionnaires*, Littré, Larousse.

heart that speaks to the heart; the mouth speaks only to the ears.

I have said the delivery should be easy, as opposed to the constrained and studied delivery of pedants; dignified, as opposed to the rustic manner of some who make a habit of striking the pulpit with their hands, their feet, their chest, and who shout and scream strangely and without reason. I have said expansive, as opposed to the timid manner of those who speak as if they were addressing their parents, and not their pupils or children; natural, as opposed to all artifice and affectation; vigorous, as opposed to a style of delivery which is dead, effeminate and languid; edifying, as opposed to flattering, courtly and worldly; grave, as opposed to the practice of those who make so many salutations and reverences to the audience, and who use so many other tricks of vanity, displaying their hands, their surplices, and other such unbecoming actions; somewhat slow, as opposed to a certain abrupt and prim kind of delivery, which attracts the attention of the eyes, rather than makes an impression on the heart.

I say the same in respect to the language, which should be clear, neat and natural, without any display of Greek, Hebrew, new or fashionable words.

The structure of the discourse should be natural, without preface or studied ornament. I approve of saying, In the first place, at the first point, In the second place, at the second point, that the people may perceive the plan.

It seems to me that no one, and least of all bishops, should flatter the audience, even were

they kings, princes and popes. There are, indeed, certain expressions calculated to win goodwill, which one may use in speaking to an audience for the first time. I am of opinion that one should express the desire he has for the good of the audience, and that one should commence by salutations and blessings and hopes of being able to assist them to work out their salvation, and that the same should be done at the conclusion, but with brevity and cordiality, and without affectation.

The ancient Fathers, and all those who have produced fruit, have abstained from such trash and worldly trifling. They spoke from the heart to the heart, from mind to mind, like good fathers to their children.

The ordinary form of address should be, My brethren, My people; if they be your own, My dear people, Christians.

A bishop should give his blessing at the conclusion, with his biretta on his head, and afterwards salute the people.

The concluding words should be brief, animated and vigorous. I approve of making as a rule a summary or recapitulation of the discourse, and then saying four or five fervent words by way of petition or exhortation.

It is desirable to have in readiness certain familiar exclamations, and to utter them judiciously and in the proper place, as: O God! Goodness of God! O good God! O Lord God! O true God! What then! Alas! Ah! My God!

As to the preparation of the sermon, I approve of making it in the evening, and of making one's meditation in the morning for oneself

on the subject on which one purposes to preach to others. The preparation should be made fervently in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, as Granada teaches,* and I agree with him.

I like a sermon that is redolent of charity rather than of indignation, even towards the Huguenots, who should be treated with great compassion, not by way of flattery, but of sympathy. It is always better that the sermon be short rather than long. In this point I have failed up to the present, but I am correcting myself. Provided it occupy half an hour it cannot be too short.

The preacher should not manifest temper if possible, or at least anger, as I did on the feast of our Lady, when the bell rang before I had finished. It was a fault in me, no doubt, along with my many others. I do not like jests and quips. Preaching is not the place for them.

I conclude by defining preaching. It is the announcement and explanation of the will of God, made to men by one who has a legitimate mission, for the purpose of instructing them and persuading them to serve His divine Majesty in this world in order to be saved in the next.

What will you say, sir,† to all this? Pardon me, I have written *currente calamo* without any

* Louis of Granada, *Rhetoricæ Eccles. seu de Ratione Concionandi,* Venice, 1578.

† In the seventeenth century the title Monseigneur was rarely used in France in addressing bishops. Monsieur was the word used. St Francis, in a letter to the Archbishop of Vienne, Nov., 1606, advocates the use of the title Monseigneur as more in conformity with the practice of the Church. Monseigneur became general in the eighteenth century.

attention either to words or art, influenced by the sole desire of showing you how much I am devoted to your service.

I have not given the references to the authors whom I have quoted in certain places; the reason is I am in the country away from books. I have spoken of myself; but I have done so because, sir, you wish to have my opinion and not that of others; and since I follow it, why should I not state it?

Before concluding this letter I must beg of you not to show it to any one who regards me with less favour than you do; and I add my very humble request that you will not allow any consideration to hinder you or cause you to delay to preach. The sooner you begin the sooner you will succeed. Preach often: there is no other way to success. You are able, and it is your duty.

Your voice is good, your learning sufficient, your manner becoming, your rank illustrious in the Church; God wills it, the people expect it. The glory of God and your own salvation are at stake. For the love of God, be confident and take courage. Cardinal Borromeo,who had not a tenth of the talent you have, preached, gave edification, and became a saint. We ought not to seek our own honour, but that of God; and God will seek ours, if we leave it to Him. Begin then, sir, first at an ordination, again at a communion; say four words, then eight, then twelve, then go on for half an hour, then ascend the pulpit. Nothing is impossible to love. Our Lord did not ask St Peter: "Are you eloquent?"

in order to say to him, "Pasce oves meas," but, "Amas Me?"* To speak well, it is enough to love. St John, in his old age, could only repeat a hundred times in a quarter of an hour: "My little children, love one another." With this provision he ascended the pulpit. We hesitate to do so unless we have stores of eloquence. Let people say what they please about the capacity of your predecessor. He had once to begin like you.

But goodness! sir, what will you say of me for going on thus simply with you? Love cannot be silent when there is question of the interest of the person beloved. Sir, I have pledged myself to fidelity to you, and one endures much from a faithful and devoted servant. You are going to your flock; oh, that it were possible for me to go so far to assist you as I had the honour of doing at your first Mass. I will accompany you by my good wishes and prayers. Your people are looking forward to see you, and to be seen and seen often by you. Commence soon to do what it will be your duty to do always. Oh, how they will be edified when they shall see you often at the altar, offering the holy Sacrifice for their salvation, treating with your parish priests for their edification, or in the pulpit speaking the word of reconciliation and preaching! Sir, I never go to the altar without recommending you to our Lord; and I shall be too happy if I am found worthy to be remembered there by you.

I am, and will be all my life, in heart, soul

* John xxi, 17.

and mind, sir, your very humble servant and very little and obedient brother,

FRANCIS, Bishop of Geneva.

October 5, 1604.

On reading over this letter I feel ashamed, and if it were shorter I would write it over again. But such is the confidence I have in the solidity of your good will, that I send it such as it is. For the love of God, love me always; and always hold me to be as much your servant as any man living, for so I am.

THE METHOD OF PREACHING

Recommended by SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

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An Outline of the Method of Preaching in use in the Congregation of the Mission

A SERMON consists of three parts: the exordium, the body of the discourse, and the conclusion or peroration.

I.—The Exordium

THE exordium comprises four points: the text, the statement of the subject, the division and the invocation.

1. The text should be: (1) taken from the holy Scripture, from the Old or the New Testament; (2) short, as "Qui se humiliat exaltabitur"; (3) clear, and without ambiguity or obscurity; (4) often repeated in the course of the sermon. In consequence it should be appropriate to the subject treated, and if it contains any means, any motive or effect of the matter in hand, the preacher must not fail to turn it to account and dwell upon it.

2. The statement of the subject is usually made by giving the reason for speaking on that subject—for instance, because the Holy Ghost

invites us thereto by the words quoted in the text, or in some other way; and this should be done very briefly, that is to say, in three or four lines; for experience shows that a long exordium is not only useless, but even prejudicial, since it tires the audience.

3. The division contains nearly always three points, but sometimes only two.

The three points are (1) the motives; (2) the definition; (3) the means to attain that which forms the subject of the discourse, together with a reply to objections.

The motives: here is to be noted that the terms, and the method of stating them should be varied, by saying, for instance, the reasons which oblige us, the motives which induce us, the importance, the necessity, the advantages there are, the obligations we have, etc.

The definition: here also the terms or expressions should be diversified, by saying for instance: "In the second point I will tell you in what such a thing consists, or its nature, its properties," or "I will explain to you what it is, and its qualities, etc."

The means: the phraseology here also should be varied, thus: "I will teach you the means, I will tell you the secret of, or the manner of acquiring, of practising, etc.," or "I will point out the dispositions one should have, etc., or the remedies which ought to be applied to that evil, etc."

The division contains only two points when the subject is sufficiently well-known, such as perseverance or relapse. It is not necessary nor even advisable to state in what relapse or perseverance consists; the second point may be

omitted, and the motives and means only may be treated, together with the answer to objections.

4. The invocation consists in asking the assistance of the Holy Ghost through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, saying, "Ave Maria."

In Italy and in France there are different usages on this point. The custom of each country is to be followed herein.

II.—The Body of the Discourse

THERE are usually three points: (1) the motives; (2) the definition; (3) the means, with the answer to objections. It is to be remarked that immediately after the invocation at the close of the exordium the preacher should enter on the motives without further preamble, as this would only serve to lengthen the sermon to no purpose.

The Motives

THE motives are deduced from the consideration of what is upright, useful or agreeable, or from their contraries, namely, what is unlawful or disgraceful, hurtful or disagreeable; to these heads are related necessity, facility, with their contraries. The motives are proved either by authority, or by reason, or by example.

1. By authority: (1) of the Scripture; (2) of the councils; (3) of tradition; (4) of the Fathers, especially those who are most ancient; (5) sometimes, too, of profane authors.

On this point it should be remarked: (1) that the passages quoted should be brief; (2) if they are of considerable length they ought to be divided into several portions, and the words

which bear most on the subject should be dwelt on; (3) they should be strengthened by reference to the character of the Fathers from whom they are taken, and to the circumstances in which they gave expression to them; (4) if the passages in question be taken from a profane writer, the authority of some of the Fathers should, if possible, be added thereto.

2. By proofs from reason, which may be drawn either from the nature of the thing in question, or its properties, or its effects, or its circumstances; taking care to join thereto, as far as possible, some suitable comparison, as our Lord did in the Gospel, and, after His example, St John Chrysostom and St Francis of Sales in their works.

3. By examples. These should be appropriate and authentic, and taken, if possible, from the holy Scripture and the holy Fathers, or from ecclesiastical history, or from grave authors, and they should be well selected and intelligible to the audience.

On this first point it is to be noted that it is advisable not to dwell long upon it, in order to have more time to develop the second, which contains the instruction and explanation, for this is what the people require most; and on that account one should ordinarily bring forward only two motives; sometimes even a single one will suffice, if it is very urgent and strong and well developed.

The Definition

1. With respect to the definition it should be remarked: (1) that it is sometimes advisable to state what the thing spoken of is not, before

stating what it is; (2) that it is not necessary that it be according to scholastic rules, it is enough that it be a good description; (3) that this point is not so unimportant as might be supposed, since it does not consist in giving a bare definition, but, in addition, the principal divisions of the subject should be given, particularly if they are necessary to understand it aright.

2. To explain the terms or chief parts of the definition.

3. To intermingle motives arising from the nature of the subject, without, however, stating that we are bringing forward motives.

4. It is, moreover, very advisable to enter into details by dwelling on the principal acts of the virtue or vice which forms the subject of the discourse, as well as on the principal occasions in which the virtue should be practised or the vice shunned.

5. Besides, the marks may be given whereby a person may know whether he possesses the virtue or is subject to the vice.

When the subject is sufficiently well-known, and yet the preacher wishes to develop a second point—for instance, if the miseries of this life and the manner of suffering them be the subject —it is needless to explain what is meant by misery; it is enough to give examples of the various kinds of evils which may be endured, etc. If the necessity of not abusing the graces of God be the subject, the principal graces should be mentioned, v.g., vocation to the Christian faith, to religious life, etc.

The Means

WITH respect to the means, it is to be observed that it is necessary (1) to point out that the means indicated are in reality means adapted to lead to the attainment of the end in question, and in this many preachers are wanting; (2) to give the general means first.

Now these means have reference either to consideration or to practice.

The former ordinarily consist in consideration or reflection on the motives or on the thing itself, and should precede the practical means. Again, the more general should precede those which are special; but special or practical means should usually be dwelt on, and but rarely those which are general or which belong to consideration.

Observe also (1) that it is advantageous to have from time to time an example for the conclusion, showing the happiness or unhappiness resulting from the matter which forms the subject of the discourse, but it should be appropriate to the subject; (2) it should contain a moral lesson; (3) it should be taken from grave authors; (4) it should be not too long.

The Objections

THEY should not be stronger than the answers to them; (2) several answers may be given; (3) the objections may sometimes be vigorously retorted; (4) when a reply of our Lord or of one of the Fathers to such an objection can be found, it is advisable to make use of it, and to say that our Lord or such a Father answers the objection as follows; (5) the objections may sometimes be placed before the means.

III—The Peroration

THE peroration consists in summing up what has been said, as well as in affections, to move the audience to put in practice what they have been taught, and to inspire them with sentiments of devotion. On this point it should be noted:

1. That it should be very brief, and not as it were a second sermon.

2. That it is useful to intermingle, briefly and forcibly, some new motive, without stating that an additional motive is being given.

3. That it is also useful from time to time to conclude by addressing our Lord, asking His grace and His assistance to accomplish those things which have formed the subject of the sermon.

Of the Affections

THE affections have for object to inspire emotion. They may be elicited almost everywhere throughout the discourse, but most of all at the conclusion of each point. This may be done:

1. By interrogations, v.g.: "Would you have ever thought? Have you believed this?" etc. After having given the definition of contrition, or of any other subject: "Well, have we this contrition? Have we that virtue?" When the marks of a virtue or of a vice have been explained: "Do we recognize these marks in ourselves? Put your hand on your heart—Does no one feel himself to be guilty of such a vice or such a sin? Have all your past confessions been good? Is it not the fact . . . . ?"

Such interrogations awaken to a high degree the attention of the audience, and usually make a deep impression on their minds.

2. By exclamations: "Ah, wretches that we are! What have we done in offending a God so good! Oh, if we knew! Oh, if we could . . . . !"

3. By admiration: "Is it possible that . . . . !"

4. By complaints to our Lord: "Alas! how unhappy we are to have offended Thee, who . . . . ! Why hast Thou permitted this? etc. Must we . . . . ?"

5. By petitions addressed to our Lord or to the saints: "Grant us, O Lord God, etc."

6. By invectives against sin, against the devil and the world: "Begone, deceiver, who treatest so ill those who enlist under thy standard! Begone, cruel monster, who castest headlong into hell those who follow thee! etc."

7. By compassion: "Oh, poor sinner, how unhappy you are in ruining yourself! In how many miseries you involve yourself! etc."

Of the Transitions

It is fitting and even necessary to connect the points of the sermon together by certain transitions. For instance, in passing from the first point, which treats of the motives, to the second, which treats of the definition, say: "Such are the motives which show us how important it is to have, v.g., contrition; let us now see what contrition means." Or again, "You will tell me that you see clearly how necessary it is to have contrition, but that you do not know in what it consists or how it is excited, and this is what

I am about to point out to you in the second point," or such-like transitions.

The same should be done in passing to the third point, v.g., "Methinks you say to me: We see how important it is to possess such a virtue, and we know in what it consists, but we confess we do not possess it. We desire to embrace it, but we perceive difficulties in the way, and we would wish to know the means to acquire it. This is what I am about to teach you. Listen attentively! This is my third point."

After stating the means, say: "Well, what remains to be done? Why do we not do this or that? We see its necessity; we know in what it consists; we have learned the means of succeeding in the effort, yet it seems to me that I hear some one saying to me," etc. Here the objections, if any, should be stated and answered. Then continue thus: "Courage then; there is no longer any obstacle to the practice of such a virtue, etc."

It is to be observed that the transitions should not be always made in the same way, but the terms and the form should be varied.

And regarding the transition from the exordium to the first point, what was mentioned in the commencement should be noted, namely, that after the "Ave Maria" the preacher should not make, as it were, a second exordium or preamble, but he should immediately proceed to the motives, not indeed by saying, "My first reason or my first motive is," etc., but, "The first point of my discourse is, as I have just stated, to lay before you the motives we have to avoid, v.g.,

sin, with all our power; and the first motive I bring forward is," etc.

Of the Delivery

1. THE whole discourse should be delivered in a natural and familiar tone of voice, with suitable inflexions, avoiding monotony and all that savours of sing-song or declamation, for the best possible matter makes, as a rule, no impression if delivered in that fashion.

2. The preacher ought not to speak in a higher tone than the audience and the space require; to speak too loud not only injures the chest of the speaker, but also pains the ears of the hearers.

3. He should speak distinctly and slowly, pausing and taking breath leisurely at the end of sentences, and still more at the end of each motive and each means.

4. One should avoid prolixity with great care, as it only wearies and confuses the poor people, who, being disgusted thereby, at the end of the sermon profit less by all that was said before. The preacher should not exceed three-quarters-of-an-hour* or thereabouts on working-days, and, though on festivals and Sundays he may speak for an hour, he should never go beyond it.

* This refers to sermons during a mission rather than to ordinary parochial preaching.

AN ENCYCLICAL LETTER ON PREACHING

BY THE CONGREGATION OF BISHOPS AND REGULARS

An Encyclical Letter on Preaching

Addressed, at the command of His Holiness LEO XIII, by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars to all the Bishops of Italy and to the Superiors of Orders and Religious Congregations

OUR holy Father, Pope Leo XIII, who has much at heart the apostolic ministry of preaching, so necessary, especially at the present time, for the proper instruction of the Christian people, has learned with great pain that, of late, several grave abuses have been introduced in the manner of announcing the word of God, which frequently render preaching contemptible, or at least sterile and unprofitable. Wherefore, following the example of his predecessors,† he has ordered this Sacred Congregation to address the bishops of Italy and the superiors of religious orders, and to stimulate their vigilance and zeal; in order that they may, as far as in them lies, apply a

† Amongst others, Clement X, Innocent XI, Innocent XII, Benedict XIII, at one time by pontifical acts, at another by means of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, or of that of Bishops and Regulars, they issued according to the necessity of the times wise prescriptions concerning sacred preaching.

remedy to this disorder, and take measures for its complete removal. In obedience, therefore, to the august commands of the holy Father, this Sacred Congregation lays before the most reverend Ordinaries and Heads of regular orders and pious ecclesiastical institutes, the following rules, that they may cause them to be observed with all diligence and care:

1. In the first place, as regards the person of the sacred orator, let them take care never to confide so holy a ministry to any one who is not animated by sincere Christian piety and inflamed with fervent love of our Lord Jesus Christ, for without this he would assuredly be nothing else than "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal," * and could never have true zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, which should be the sole motive and end of preaching. And this piety, so necessary for sacred preachers of the word of God, should also shine in their external conduct, which ought not to be in contradiction to what they preach from the pulpit, nor have anything secular or worldly, but ought always to be such as to mark them out as "ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God"; † else, as St Thomas observes, if the doctrine be good and the preacher wicked, he becomes an occasion of blaspheming the word of God. ‡

2. To piety and Christian virtue learning must also be joined, since it is manifest and proved by constant experience that it is vain to expect truly solid, well-ordered and fruitful preaching from

* 1 Cor. xiii, 1. † 1 Cor. iv, 1.

‡ "Si doctrina est bona et prædicator malus, ipse est occasio blasphemiæ in doctrinam Dei."—*Comment. in Matt.* v.

those who have not been formed by good studies, especially in sacred science, and who, relying on a certain natural facility of speech which they possess, ascend the pulpit with little or no preparation. Such preachers ordinarily do nothing but "beat the air" and, without perhaps perceiving it, bring contempt and ridicule on the word of God. To them, therefore, are justly applicable the words: "Because thou hast rejected knowledge I will reject thee, that thou shalt not do the office of the priesthood to me." *

Wherefore, after—and not until—the priest shall have acquired the aforesaid qualifications, then only shall the Most Reverend Ordinaries and Heads of regular orders confide to him the great ministry of preaching the word of God; keeping watch withal, constantly, that the preacher confines himself to such subjects as peculiarly belong to sacred preaching. Now those subjects are indicated in these words of the divine Redeemer, "Preach the gospel." † "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.‡ According to these words the angelic doctor wrote: "Preachers should instruct in matters of belief, guide in matters of conduct, point out what is to be shunned, and, at one time by menaces at another by exhortation, preach the doctrines of salvation to men." § And the holy Council of Trent says: "Annunciantes eis vitia quæ eos declinare, et virtutes quas sectari oportet, ut pœnam æternam

* Osee iv, 6. † Mark xvi, 15. ‡ Matt. xxviii, 20.

§ "Prædicatores debent illuminare in credendis, dirigere in operandis, vitanda manifestare, et modo comminando, modo exhortando, hominibus salutaria prædicare" *(loco supra citato)*.

evadere, et cœlestem gloriam consequi valeant." * But much more fully was this set forth by the supreme pontiff, Pius IX, in the following terms (Encyc. 9 Novemb., 1846): "Not preaching themselves but Christ crucified, let them clearly and openly announce to the people in a grave and perspicuous style the most holy dogmas and precepts of our religion, according to the teaching of the Church and of the Fathers; let them accurately explain the peculiar duties of each, and deter all from sin and excite them to piety, that the faithful, being fed with the salutary word of God, may shun all vices, pursue virtue, and so escape eternal punishment and obtain the glory of heaven." † Whence it is manifest that the Creed, the Decalogue, the precepts of the Church, the sacraments, the virtues and vices, and the various duties of different states of life, the last things and other such-like eternal truths, should form the ordinary subject-matter of preaching.

3. But these very weighty subjects are sadly neglected by many preachers, for, "seeking the things that are their own ‡ and not the things that are Jesus Christ's," and knowing well that these are not the subjects most appropriate to

* Sess. v, c. 2, de Ref.

† "Non semetipsos, sed Christum crucifixum prædicantes sanctissima religionis nostræ dogmata et præcepta juxta Catholicæ Ecclesiæ et Patrum doctrinam, gravi et splendido orationis genere populo clare, aperteque annuncient, peculiaria singulorum officia accurate explicent, omnesque a flagitiis deterreant, ad pietatem inflamment, quo fideles, Dei verbo salubriter refecti, vitia omnia declinent, virtutes sectentur, atque ita æternas pœnas evadere et cœlestem gloriam consequi valeant" (Pius IX, Encyc., 9 Nov., 1846).

‡ Phil. ii, 21.

obtain for them the popularity they ambition, designedly pass them over, especially in the time of Lent and certain other greater solemnities; and with the subjects, changing the names, they substitute for the ancient sermons a kind of preaching which, by a misuse of words, they style conferences, adapted to please the intellect, or rather the imagination, but not to move the will or reform morals. Nor do they perceive that moral discourses are profitable to all, while conferences are useful only to a few, and those few, if they were but more carefully formed to good morals, that is, if they were helped more diligently to live with more chastity, more humility and more obedience to the authority of the Church, would by that very fact have their minds preserved from innumerable prejudices against faith, and would be more disposed to receive the light of truth. For errors in matters of religion, especially among Catholics, have generally their roots in the passions of the heart rather than in the aberrations of the intellect, according to what is written, "From the heart come forth evil thoughts . . . . blasphemies."* Therefore, on this passage of the psalmist, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God," † St Augustine wisely remarks, "In his heart, but not in his intellect."

4. But in speaking thus we do not mean to condemn absolutely the use of conferences, which, if rightly conducted, may in certain cases be very useful and even necessary, in the midst of so many errors which are spread abroad against

* Matt. xv, 19. † Ps. xiii, 1.

religion. But from the Christian pulpit those pompous discourses should be banished which treat of subjects theoretical rather than practical, civil rather than religious, showy rather than useful, and suited perhaps to the pages of a journal or the halls of an academy, but altogether unsuited to the holy place.

As to those conferences which have for their object to defend religion against the attacks of its enemies, they are occasionally necessary, but they are a burden not suited to the shoulders of all, but only of the most robust. And even the most capable orators require to use herein great prudence; for such apologetic conferences should be delivered only in such places, at such times and to such audiences, as really require them, and when a real advantage may be expected from them; and of this the Ordinaries are evidently the most competent judges. And they should be conducted in such a manner that the proofs shall be solidly grounded on sacred doctrine rather than on human or natural arguments, and they should be framed with such solidity and clearness that there shall be no danger lest certain minds be more impressed by the errors than by the truths opposed to them, and by the objections more than by the refutation of them. Above all, care is to be taken lest the undue frequency of conferences should diminish the esteem and use of moral preaching, as though the latter were of secondary rank and of less importance than the former, and therefore to be left to ordinary preachers and ordinary audiences; whereas the truth is, moral discourses are far more necessary for the bulk of the faith-

ful and are no less excellent than apologetic discourses; and consequently the ablest and most celebrated orators should deliver them, at least occasionally, even in addressing the most select and numerous audiences. If this be not done, those great audiences will be condemned always to hear errors spoken of which are often not to be found amongst them, but no mention of the vices and faults which are wont to abound in such assemblies more than in others of less importance.

But if many abuses are to be found in the choice of the subjects treated, others no less serious are to be deplored in the manner of treating them. On this point St Thomas of Aquin teaches excellently that to be truly "the light of the world, the preacher of the word of God should possess three characteristics: the first is firmness, in order not to deviate from truth; the second is clearness, in order to teach without obscurity; and the third is utility of aim, in order to seek the glory of God and not his own."* But, unhappily, the form of many modern sermons is not only far removed from that evangelical clearness and simplicity which should characterize them, but they are involved in obscurity and made up of abstruse reasoning which overpasses the ordinary capacity of the people, so that they bring to mind the lamentation: "The little ones have asked for bread, and there was no one to break it unto them."† What

* "Ut vere lux mundi, tria debet habere prædicator verbi divini: primum est stabilitas ut non deviet a veritate; secundum est claritas ut non doceat cum obscuritate; tertium est utilitas ut quærat Dei laudem et non suam."—*Loc. citat.*

† Lam. iv, 4.

is worse, there is frequently wanting in those sermons that sacred character, that inspiration of Christian piety, that unction of the Holy Spirit, by reason of which the evangelical preacher should always be able to say of himself, "My speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the showing of the spirit and power."*

Those preachers, on the contrary, relying almost exclusively on the persuasive words of human wisdom, make little or no account of the word of God—the holy Scripture—which ought to be the chief source of sacred eloquence, as the supreme Pontiff, now happily reigning, recently taught in most weighty terms, which we think it opportune to repeat:

"The peculiar and singular power of the Scripture arising from the divine inspiration of the Holy Ghost is this: it gives authority to the sacred orator, imparts to him apostolic liberty of speech and endows him with nervous and convincing eloquence. For whoever reproduces in his sermons the spirit and force of the word of God speaks not in "word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost and in much fulness." †

"Wherefore they must be held to act unreasonably and imprudently who preach on religious subjects and enumerate the divine precepts in such a way as to bring forward only the words of human learning and prudence, relying on their own arguments rather than on such as are divine. Their preaching, however brilliant, must of necessity be languid and cold,

* 1 Cor. ii, 4. † 1 Thess. i, 5.

since it is devoid of the fire of the word of God. 'For the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword, and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit.'*

"Yet this much the most prudent must admit: that there exists in the sacred Scripture an eloquence of marvellous variety and richness, and adapted to great subjects. St Augustine perceived this and eloquently proves it,† and experience shows it; for the most celebrated preachers testify with gratitude to God that they owe their reputation chiefly to frequent study and meditation on the Bible."‡

The holy Bible, then, is the principal source of

* Heb. iv, 12.

† *De Doctrina Christ.*, lib. iv, 6, 7.

‡ "Hæc propria et singularis scripturarum virtus a divino afflatu Spiritus Sancti profecta, ea est quæ oratori sacro auctoritatem addit, apostolicam præbet dicendi libertatem, nervosam victricemque tribuit eloquentiam. Quisquis enim divini verbi spiritum et robur eloquendo refert, ille non loquitur in sermone tantum, sed et in virtute et Spiritu Sancto et in plenitudine multa.

"Quamobrem ii dicendi sunt præpostere improvide facere, qui ita conciones de religione habent, et præcepta divina enunciant, nihil ut fere afferant nisi humanæ scientiæ et prudentiæ verba, suis magis argumentis quam divinis innixi. Istorum scilicet orationem, quantumvis nitentem luminibus, languescere et frigere necesse est, utpote quæ igne carente sermonis Dei, eandemque longe abesse ab illa qua divinus sermo pollet virtute: 'Vivus est enim sermo Dei, et efficax, et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti, et pertingens usque ad divisionem animæ et spiritus' (Heb. iv, 12). Quamquam hoc etiam prudentioribus assentiendum est, inesse in sacris litteris mire variam et uberem magnisque dignam rebus eloquentiam; id quod Augustinus pervidit, diserteque arguit (*De Doctrina Christiana,* iv, 6, 7); atque res ipsa confirmat præstantissimorum in oratoribus sacris, qui nomen suum assiduæ Bibliorum consuetudini piæque meditationi se præcipue debere, grati Deo affirmant."—*Lit. Encyc. de Studiis Scrip. S.,* Nov. 18, 1893.

sacred eloquence. But those preachers filled with modern ideas, instead of drawing their eloquence from the "fountains of living water," have recourse to the "broken cisterns" of human wisdom; instead of bringing forward the divinely-inspired texts of the Scripture, or the teaching of the Fathers or of the Councils, they quote an abundance of writers—profane and living authors—whose words admit of an interpretation often very equivocal and very dangerous. "It is also a great abuse of sacred eloquence to treat religious questions only from the point of view of the interests of the present life and not to speak of that which is to come; to enumerate the benefits conferred on society by the Christian religion and to pass over in silence the obligations it imposes; to depict the divine Redeemer as an eminent philanthropist and to omit mention of His justice as eternal Judge. Hence the fruit of such preaching is small, and a man of the world may go away from it persuaded that, without changing his morals, he may call himself a good Christian, provided he believes in Jesus Christ."*

But what matters the fruit to those of whom we speak? This is not what they chiefly aim at. They seek to please their audience who have "itching ears,"† and provided they see the churches crowded they are little concerned that souls remain without profit. Hence they never speak of sin, or of the last things, or of other most weighty truths calculated to make men "sorrowful unto penance."‡ They speak only "pleasant things,"§ and in a style suited to

*Card. Bausa, Abp of Florence, to his young Ecclesiastics, 1893.
† 2 Tim. iv, 3. ‡ 2 Cor. vii, 9. § Isa. xxx, 10.

the platform rather than the pulpit, profane rather than sacred, and one which earns for them approbation and applause, such as St Jerome condemned when he wrote, "When you are preaching in the church, let not the people make a noise, but let them profoundly sigh. Let the tears of your auditors be your praise." * Hence it comes to pass that their preaching in the church and elsewhere has a certain theatrical tone which deprives it of its sacred character and spiritual efficacy. Whence there results amongst the people and even amongst some of the clergy a vitiated taste in respect to the word of God, giving scandal to the pious and little or no profit to the erring and incredulous; who—although they sometimes come to the church to hear the word of God, especially if attracted by the high sounding and grand words, Progress, Fatherland and Modern Science, and loudly applaud the preacher as a man who knows the true style of preaching—go forth from the church such as they entered, like the Jews, "qui omnes quidem mirabantur sed non omnes convertebantur." †

Therefore, this Sacred Congregation, in obedience to the supreme commands of the Roman pontiff, and desiring to provide a remedy for so many and so grave abuses in the matter of sacred preaching, calls upon all the Most Reverend Bishops and Generals of Regulars, and of Pious Institutes, to act with apostolic firmness, and sedulously apply to the extirpation of them. Mindful then, according to the pre-

* To Nepotian. † St August. on Matt. xix, 25.

scription of the holy Council of Trent, that they are bound to select fitting persons for the office of preaching, let them employ the greatest possible diligence and care in this matter. If there be question of priests belonging to their own dioceses, let them not confide to them so august a ministry until by examination, or in some other suitable way, they have obtained proof of their fitness in respect to conduct and knowledge. "Nisi prius de vita, et scientia et moribus probati fuerint."*

If priests from other dioceses be in question, let them not admit them to preach in theirs, especially on certain more solemn festivals, unless they present letters from their own bishop or superior, testifying to their good conduct and fitness for that office. In like manner let the superiors of religious of whatsoever order, society or congregation, permit none of their subjects to preach, much less present them to the Ordinaries with testimonial letters, unless they are first assured that their moral conduct is good and their method of preaching the word of God correct.

And if after having admitted a priest to preach, the bishop of any diocese finds that in the discharge of that duty he departs from the rules here laid down, let him first admonish him that if possible he may amend; and if that be not sufficient, let him remove him from that office, using canonical penalties should the nature of the case require it.

For the rest, since this Sacred Congregation

* Sess. V, c. 2, De Reform.

knows that it can safely rely on the diligence and zeal of the Most Reverend Ordinaries and Heads of Religious Orders, it therefore trusts that chiefly through their exertions this modern method of preaching or rather adulterating the word of God will be speedily reformed, and that the vain pomp of words being removed, the native splendour and supernatural efficacy of sacred preaching will be at length restored for the glory of God, the salvation of souls, and the spiritual advantage of the Church and of the whole Christian world.

ISODORE CARD. VERGA, *Prefect.*
ALOYSIUS TROMBETTA, *Pro Sec.*

Rome. From the Office of the Secretary of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. July 31, 1894.

DE CATECHIZANDIS RUDIBUS

BY ST AUGUSTINE

De Catechizandis Rudibus*

A Treatise on the Manner of Catechizing the Uninstructed

By ST AUGUSTINE

Bishop of Hippo

CHAPTER I

At the request of a Deacon at Carthage, St Augustine undertakes to teach the method of teaching the first Principles of Religion to the uninstructed

YOU have asked me, dear Deogratias, to write something for your use on the manner of catechizing the uninstructed. For you tell me that at Carthage, where you are a deacon, persons

* At the request of Deogratias, a deacon at Carthage, St Augustine undertakes to teach the method of instructing converts in the first principles of Religion. He first lays down the rules to be observed in the discharge of that duty, and exhorts to perform it not only without repugnance but even with cheerfulness. Then, to exemplify the rules he has laid down, he gives two specimens, one more full and the other brief, of a catechetical instruction. The treatise "De Catechizandis Rudibus" was written about A.D. 395. Amongst the letters of St Augustine there is one, No. 102 (Benedict. Edit.), addressed to a priest at Carthage named Deogratias. He is probably the same person at whose request, while yet a deacon, this treatise was composed.

are often brought to you to be instructed in the rudiments of the Christian faith, because you are thought to be skilled in instructing by reason of your learning and your facility in speaking; but that for yourself you are nearly always uneasy as to the best method of teaching what a Christian must believe, where to begin, how far to proceed with the instruction, whether some exhortation should be added at the conclusion, or whether to confine yourself to the precepts by the observance of which the person under instruction may be able to lead a Christian life. You acknowledge and lament that your discourse often seems to you tiresome and uninteresting, and that you yourself are filled with disgust, to say nothing of the person under instruction or of those who are present, and that you are therefore forced by necessity to call on me in the name of that affection I bear you, to be good enough, in spite of my occupations, to give you in writing some advice on this subject.

For my part, not only by reason of the particular affection I bear you, but also by reason of the general charity and devotion I owe to our mother the Church, if by the talents God has bestowed upon me I can in aught assist those whom the Lord has made my brethren, I feel compelled not to refuse, but rather to undertake the task promptly and readily. For the more earnestly I desire that the treasures of the Lord be widely distributed, the more am I bound to assist my codispensers when I perceive that they feel a difficulty in their office, that so they may be able to do easily and promptly what they earnestly and zealously desire to accomplish.

CHAPTER II

How it happens that a Speaker is sometimes dissatisfied with a Discourse which satisfies the Hearers

As regards yourself, do not feel concerned that your discourse seems to you uninteresting and tiresome. It may be it does not appear such to the person you instruct, but because you desire to say something better, that which you do say seems to you unworthy of being listened to. I too experience this, and my discourses hardly ever please me. I am eager to express myself better, and oftentimes I have the idea clearly before my mind before I attempt to express it in words, and when I do not succeed, I am saddened because my words do not fully express my ideas. For I desire that the person who listens to me should understand all I have in my mind, and I feel that I cannot express myself so as to accomplish this; chiefly because the idea, as with a rapid flash, lights up the mind, but the expression is tardy and slow, and falls far short of the conception in the mind, and while words are being selected the idea disappears. But because some vestiges of it remain impressed on the memory, we catch up these in syllables and from them form words which we express in Latin, Greek or Hebrew, or any other language whether in thought or orally, yet

the impressions from which the words are formed are neither Latin, Greek nor Hebrew, nor of any other language, but they are formed in the mind as the expression of the countenance is in the body.

Anger is expressed by one word in Latin, by another in Greek, and by others in other languages, but the expression of countenance of an angry man is neither Latin nor Greek. For when a man says, "Iratus sum (I am angry)," all do not understand, but only such as speak Latin; but if marks of the anger within appear externally on the countenance, all who see him understand. But it is not possible to express and convey to the hearer by the sound of the voice those impressions which the intellect imprints on the memory, with the same ease as the expression of the countenance is made clear and manifest; for the former are internal in the mind, the latter external in the body. Hence one may judge how far our words fall short of our conceptions, since they do not come up to the impression left on the memory itself. Now, it often happens that through an ardent desire to benefit the person under instruction, we wish to speak as we conceive, and the very effort hinders us; and, because we do not succeed, we are distressed and filled with disgust, as though our efforts were fruitless; and in consequence our discourse becomes more languid and dull than before.

But in my own case the attention of those who desire to hear me frequently shows me that my discourse is not so uninteresting as it appears to myself, and I perceive by the attention they

pay that they derive some profit from it, and I make an effort not to be wanting in the discharge of that duty when I see that they receive well the instruction given them. So in your case, from the fact that persons to be instructed are often brought to you, you ought to conclude that your discourse is not so uninteresting to others as it is to yourself. Nor should you consider it useless that you do not explain your ideas as clearly as you would wish, for perhaps you are not able to see them as clearly as you would desire. For who sees in this life otherwise than "through a glass in a dark manner"?* For our love is not so great that, bursting through the darkness of the flesh, it can penetrate the brightness of eternity; whence the light of those ideas that pass away shine, however faintly. Yet, as the good make progress day by day to see that day which knows no revolution of the heavens or vicissitudes of night, "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man,"† there is no greater reason why our discourse seems to us uninteresting when we instruct the ignorant than because we desire to see beyond what is common, and are loth to speak those things which are common. And, in truth, we are listened to with greater pleasure when we ourselves are pleased with our task. Our joy influences the current of our discourse, and it flows more easily and agreeably. It is, therefore, a matter of no great difficulty to see where to begin the explanation of what is to be

* 1 Cor. xiii, 12. † 1 Cor. ii, 9.

believed, and how far to proceed, and how to vary the discourse so as to make it at one time longer, at another shorter, yet always full and perfect, or to discern when it should be long and when short. But the most difficult point is to lay down what the catechist must do to fulfil his office with pleasure, for the better he succeeds in this, the more pleasing will be his discourse; and the rule to be observed for that end is not far to seek. For if "God loves the cheerful giver"* in the case of corporal alms, how much more in the case of that which is spiritual! But to have this cheerfulness at the moment suitable for those who desire instruction, belongs to the mercy of Him who has commanded these things. I shall, therefore, with the help of God, speak as you desire, first of the historical narrative, then of the precepts and of exhortation, and, lastly, of the method of acquiring cheerfulness.

* 2 Cor. ix, 7.

CHAPTER III

The Catechist should teach the History of Religion

THE instruction by way of narrative is complete when the person catechized is taught from where it is written, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth," * up to the present state of the Church. However, it is not necessary to repeat and go over by way of narrative and explanation the whole Pentateuch, with the books of Judges, Kings and Esdras, and the whole of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, even though one knew them word for word, for time would not permit and there is no necessity to do so. But all should be gone over in a summary and general way, selecting the facts that are most salient and are listened to with greatest attention, and which form, as it were, fundamental points. And these should not be presented, as it were, in mystery and presently withdrawn from view, but they should be dwelt upon and developed and presented to the hearers as worthy of consideration and admiration.

The other details may be passed over more rapidly. In this way the more important facts to which we desire to draw attention will be made more prominent by giving less relief to the others. The hearer, too, whose interest we

* Gen. i, 1.

desire to awaken by the narrative, will be less fatigued, and his memory will not be overburdened with the instruction we impart.

In all this not only must we ourselves look to the end of the commandment which "is charity from a pure heart and a good conscience and an unfeigned faith,"* and refer all that we say to it; but the attention of the person instructed must also be directed to the same end. For all that was written in the Scriptures before the coming of our Lord was written for no other purpose than to announce His coming and to prefigure the Church, that is the people of God throughout all nations, which is His body, including all the saints, even those who lived before His birth and who believed that He was to come just as we believe that He has come. For as at the birth of Jacob his hand first appeared holding the foot of his brother born before him, then the head followed and the other members,† yet the head excelled in dignity and power, not only the other members but also the hand, not indeed in order of time but in the order of nature; so too our Lord Jesus Christ, before He appeared on earth and coming forth from the bosom of His silence, showed Himself the mediator of God and men,‡ who is above all God blessed for ever, sent before Him in the holy patriarchs and prophets § as it were a portion of His body, to announce His birth; and thereby, as with five fingers, by the bonds of the law He supplanted the people that proudly preceded. For during five periods of

* 1 Tim. i, 5. † Gen. xxv, 25. ‡ 1 Tim. ii, 5.
§ Rom. ix, 5.

time He was unceasingly announced and foretold in prophecy, and in conformity with this figure he, by whom the law was given, wrote five books; and the proud, carnal-minded Jews, "seeking to establish their own justice,"* were not filled with blessings from the open hand of Christ, but were held fast in its grasp, and their feet "being bound they have fallen, and we are risen and set upright." †

Although, as I have said, Christ the Lord sent before, as it were, a portion of His body in the saints who preceded Him, yet "He is the head of the body,"‡ which is the Church, of which they are all members by believing in Him whom they announced. For by preceding Him they were not separated from Him, but rather by obedience they were joined to Him. For though the hand may go before the head it remains united to it. For whatsoever things were written before His coming "were written for our learning,"§ and were a figure of us, and "all these things happened" unto them in figures, but "were written for our correction upon whom the ends of the world are come." ‖

* Rom. x, 3. † Ps. xix, 9. ‡ Col. i, 18.
§ Rom. xv, 4. ‖ 1 Cor. x, 11.

CHAPTER IV

The Chief End of the Coming of Christ was Charity

Now what was the principal reason why our Lord came but to show the charity of God towards us and to commend it strongly, because "when as yet we were all His enemies, Christ died for us"?* This He did because the "end of the commandment is charity," † and "love is the fulfilling of the law," ‡ and "that we might love one another," § and as "He laid down His life for us, we might lay down our lives for our brethren," ‖ and that "since God loved us, and spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him for us," ¶ we should not be loth, at least now, to make Him a return of love, if before we were wanting in this. For there is no greater invitation to love than to be first in loving. That heart is singularly hard which, though it had no love before, is unwilling to make a return of love. Now in the case of sinful and interested love we see that they who desire to have their love returned do nothing else but disclose and show by every means in their power the extent of their love, and they claim it as a kind of justice to be loved in turn by those whom they seek to bewitch, and they burn more

* Rom. v, 8, 9. † 2 Tim. i, 5. ‡ Rom. xiii, 10.
§ 1 John iv, 7. ‖ Ibid iii, 16. ¶ Rom. viii, 32.

ardently when they perceive that those whom they love are inflamed with the same passion. If then the heart which was insensible is inflamed when it perceives that it is loved, and if he who loves has his passion increased when he sees it reciprocated, it is manifest that there is no greater incentive to love, if it does not yet exist, than to know that one is loved, and no greater means of increasing it where it exists, than to hope or experience that the love which one feels is returned.

And if this is the case in sinful love, how much more in the friendship which is true? Why do we avoid with such care to give offence to those we love, but because we fear our friend may imagine that we do not love him at all, or that we do not love him as much as he loves us? Should he imagine this, he will be more remiss in that love which men bear each other in mutual intercourse, and if he is not so weak as, on account of the offence, to give up all love, he will confine himself to that charity which is limited to good will, but does not extend to the enjoyment of mutual society. It is worth while to observe that those who are higher in rank wish to be loved by their inferiors, and are pleased with their respect, and the more they perceive that they are loved by their inferiors the more they love them in turn.

Yet how much more are inferiors inflamed with love when they see themselves loved by a superior! For love is more acceptable when it springs not from the aridity of need, but flows from the abundance of beneficence. The former love springs from misery, the latter from mercy.

And if the inferior had no hope of being loved by a person of higher rank, he is wonderfully moved to love, should the latter condescend to show how much he loves one who did not venture to hope for such a favour. Now, who is higher than God, who is our judge? Who has so little hope of being loved as sinful man, who has given himself up to be a slave to the powers of pride, that can confer no happiness, and has done this the more completely because he despaired of being loved by that Power who wills not to be sublime in malice, but is sublime in goodness?

Since, then, Christ came especially that man might know how much God loves him, and be in consequence inflamed with the love of Him who loved him first, and might learn to love his neighbour after the example and injunction of Him who by love became a neighbour to man, who was not His neighbour, but had wandered from Him; and since the whole of the divine scripture of the Old Testament was written to announce His coming; and since what was afterwards written and confirmed by divine authority speaks of Christ and of His love—it is manifest that not only the whole law and the prophets, which were the only scriptures in the time of our Lord, but also all the volumes of the sacred books which were subsequently written and handed down to memory, depend on these two commandments* of the love of God and the love of the neighbour. Wherefore in the Old Testament the New is contained in mystery, and in the New the Old is manifested.

* Matt. xxii, 40.

The carnal-minded, both then and now, understanding carnally what is veiled in mystery, are held in the servitude of fear. But the spiritual-minded—both those who in the past knocked and the mystery was opened unto them, and those who in the present do not seek proudly, lest what is open should be shut against them—understanding according to the manifestation of the New Testament, are set free by the charity which is given unto them. Now, as nothing is so much opposed to charity as envy, and as the mother of envy is pride, our Lord Jesus Christ has become a proof of God's love to us, and an example of humility to man, that our great pride might be healed by a greater remedy. The pride of man is a great misery, but the humility of a God is a greater mercy.

Setting this love, therefore, before you as the end to which your instruction should be referred, proceed with your discourse in such a manner that he whom you address may from hearing go on to belief, from belief to hope, and from hope to love.

CHAPTER V

The Catechumen should be asked what Motive impels him to embrace the Christian Religion

On the foundation of the severity of God, by which the hearts of men are inspired with salutary fear, the edifice of charity must be erected; so that he who is being instructed may, through joy at being loved by Him whom he fears, have courage to love Him in return, and may be afraid to displease Him even if he could do it with impunity. For it rarely, or rather never, happens that any one comes desiring to be a Christian unless he is influenced by the fear of God. For if it be in view of some advantage from men whom he cannot hope otherwise to please, or to escape some disadvantage from those whose enmity he dreads, that a man desires to become a Christian, he does not really desire it, but he desires to deceive. For faith is not an affair of external salutations,* but of belief in the mind.

But in truth it often happens that the mercy of God, by means of the catechist, causes him who had resolved on deception to really will to be a Christian; and when he begins to have this desire, it is then we may consider him to have come. For the moment when he whom we see

* For *salutantis* some editions read *salutis*, others *salvandi corporis*.

before us, comes interiorly, is hidden from us, yet we ought so to treat him that this will may arise within him if it be not already present. In this way no harm is done ; for if the will already exists it is strengthened, though at what time or hour it began to exist we know not. It is indeed advisable to obtain information beforehand, if possible, from those who know the catechumen, as to his state of mind and for what purpose he comes to embrace our religion. If there be no one from whom we can learn this, we must interrogate the person himself, and take occasion from his answer to make a commencement of our discourse. But if he comes with a deceitful mind, in order to obtain worldly advantages or to escape from disadvantages, he will certainly speak falsely. Yet even from his falsehood we must take occasion to make a beginning : not to refute his falsehood as though it were certain, but that, if he says, whether truly or falsely, that he has come from a praiseworthy motive, we may praise the motive for which he says he has come, and may make him desire to be such as he wishes to appear to be. But if he assigns a motive different from that which should animate a person who aspires to be a Christian, one should rebuke him mildly and gently, as being uninstructed and ignorant, and teach him briefly and gravely the true end of Christian doctrine, so as not to waste time uselessly or impart instruction to a mind unprepared for it, and in this way one should make him desire that which through error or deceit he did not desire before.

CHAPTER VI

How to commence the Instruction. History of Religion from the Creation of Man

SHOULD he state that it is in consequence of an admonition or fear coming from above that he desires to be a Christian, he affords an excellent opportunity of commencing by considering the care of God over us. But his attention ought to be diverted from such miraculous interventions and dreams to the more solid paths and more excellent oracles of the Scriptures, that he may understand how mercifully that admonition was vouchsafed to him before he became acquainted with the Scriptures. And it should be pointed out to him that our Lord would not admonish him or invite him to be a Christian and a member of the Church, nor have instructed him by such signs and revelations, unless He willed him to follow with greater security and safety the path prepared in the Scriptures; wherein he must not seek visible miracles, but must accustom himself to hope for that which is invisible, and must expect to be admonished not in a sleep but while awake.

Then the instruction should be commenced at the point where God "created all things good,"* and be continued down to the present

* Gen. i, 31.

state of the Church, in such a manner as, while narrating events and actions, to explain their causes and reasons, and to refer them to that end of charity from which our eyes in speech or action should never be turned away. For as they who are considered good masters of grammar refer to some good end, however vain and worldly it be, the fictions of the poets which were composed for the pleasure of those who delight in trifles, how much more careful ought not we to be that those things which we narrate with truth may not be believed from a vain attraction or from motives of pernicious interest, for want of a well reasoned and well ordered explanation! However, we must not enter into a statement of reasons in such a way as to digress from the narrative and allow our mind and our expressions to become entangled in the more difficult questions; but the explanation of the reasons should be like the gold setting which holds gems together, and does not in any way by its excess detract from the beauty of their arrangement.

CHAPTER VII

Having been taught the History of Religion, the Catechumen should be instructed concerning the Resurrection, the Last Judgement, and how to lead a Christian Life

HAVING concluded the historical explanation, the hope of the Resurrection should be explained, and as far as the strength and capacity of the listener and time will permit, the vain objections of infidels against it should be treated; and one should speak of the last judgement, which will be merciful for the good, severe for the wicked, and just for all. Next, the punishment of the wicked should be described with sentiments of detestation and horror, and the kingdom of the just and faithful, and the joys of the heavenly city should be set forth with feelings of holy desire. Then, considering his frailty, the catechumen should be warned and animated against temptations and scandals, whether they come from without or from within the Church; from pagans, or Jews, or heretics without, and from the chaff of the Lord's threshing-floor within.

In doing this it is not necessary to speak of all classes of wicked men, nor to refute all their opinions and errors; but one should briefly point out, if time permits, that such things were foretold, as well as what an advantage trials are for the formation of the faithful, and what a salutary

lesson the patience of God, who decreed to permit such things, contains. In imparting instruction in respect to the dangers arising from the perverse men who throng our churches, the precepts of a virtuous and Christian life should be inculcated briefly and becomingly; in order that the person under instruction may not be led astray by drunkards, by the covetous, the fraudulent, gamesters, adulterers, fornicators, lovers of theatres, wearers of amulets, followers of witchcraft, fortune-tellers, or persons who by vain or evil means practise divination and the like; and that he may not imagine that he can do likewise with impunity, because he sees that many who are called Christians love, perform, defend, advise and persuade such practices. He should be made to understand by the testimony of the Scripture what is to be the end of those who persevere in such a life, as well as with what charity they are to be tolerated in the Church from which they are one day to be separated. He should also be warned that he will find in the Church many good Christians, true citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, provided he himself be such.

Finally, he should be admonished not to put his trust in men, because man cannot easily judge who is just, and even if he could the example of the just is not set before us that we may be justified by them, but that by imitating them we also may have the assurance that we are justified by Him who made them just. In this way a most desirable result will be attained; he who hears us, or rather hears God through us, will make progress in good morals and in knowledge, and will enter with alacrity on the way of God,

and will not venture to attribute his progress either to himself or to us, but will love both himself and us and all his friends in Him who loved His enemies and made them His friends. And here it is needless to tell you that when your own time or that of the person whom you instruct requires it, you may contract your discourse, and if you have more leisure you may expand it, for even without advice necessity itself directs to follow this course.

CHAPTER VIII

How to Teach the Principles of Religion to the Learned

BUT we must not omit to mention that if any one who has received a cultured and liberal education comes to be catechized with the determination to be a Christian, it is very improbable that he does not already know much of our Scriptures and literature; and, being instructed in these, he comes merely to be admitted to the sacraments. For such persons do not await the moment of their reception into the Church, but long beforehand they are wont to inquire diligently into every point, and to communicate their sentiments and discuss them with such as they have an opportunity of consulting. To such as these one must speak therefore with greater brevity and not weary them by going over what they already know, but one should touch lightly on the various points, telling them, for instance, that we believe, as they are already aware, such and such doctrines, and in that way go over all that is usually taught to the ignorant; that he who is learned may hear what he already knows, not as though we would teach him, and that, if perchance he is ignorant of it, while we go over it he may learn what we supposed him to have known. Nor is it amiss to ask him what led him to desire to become a Christian, so that if you perceive that he was

influenced either by reading the canonical books or the works of commentators, you may at the outset make some observations regarding them, commending them according to their worth, whether as canonical or as the works of authors of learning, and in the case of the Scripture commending in a particular manner the salutary humility of its wonderful sublimity, and in the case of the others the style more elegant and elaborate, according to each author's capacity, and thereby adapted to minds that are more haughty and, therefore, more infirm.

In truth, it is advisable that he should state what author in particular he has read, and what are the works to which he has given greatest attention and which led him to desire to enter the Church. When he has stated this, then, if we are acquainted with those books, or if from the character they bear in the Church we know them to have been written by an approved Catholic author, we should commend them. But if he has chanced to fall in with the writings of some heretic, and holds, without knowing it, what the true faith condemns, believing it to be Catholic doctrine, he should be enlightened as to his error by the authority of the universal Church and by the teaching and writings of the most learned men who have flourished within its fold. Yet even authors who have departed this life in the Catholic faith and have left doctrinal works to posterity, either from their not being rightly understood in some points, or from their not having been able through human weakness to penetrate difficult questions, or from their being led

away by an appearance of truth, have been the occasion to certain proud and presumptuous men of forming and promulgating heresies. Nor is this to be wondered at; for it has happened in the case of the Scripture itself, in which everything has been correctly expressed. For many persons, not indeed by understanding certain passages differently from what the writer intended or from truth—for if that were the case who would not be ready to pardon human weakness if it were prepared to receive correction?—but by bitterly and obstinately defending their own perverse and erroneous opinions have originated many pernicious doctrines and have rent the unity of the Church. With one who comes to the Church, not as uninstructed but as cultured and polished by the study of the works of the learned, all these points should be treated after the manner of a modest conference, assuming as much authority to warn him against presumption and error as the humility which has led him on seems to permit. But the other points of salutary doctrine, whether regarding faith or morals or temptations, are to be treated as I have already described, and all are to be referred to that more excellent way.

CHAPTER IX

How Students of Literature and Eloquence are to be Instructed

OCCASIONALLY there come from the most frequented schools of the grammarians and orators persons whom you cannot rank amongst the uneducated, nor yet amongst the erudite whose minds have been exercised in the highest studies. When those then who seem to excel others in the art of oratory present themselves for the purpose of becoming Christians, in addition to the instruction imparted to the illiterate they should be admonished to put on Christian humility, and to learn not to despise such as avoid faults of conduct more than faults of grammar, and not to put an eloquent tongue on a level with a chaste heart, as they had been accustomed to do. They should be instructed in a special manner how to give ear to the divine Scripture, lest its language not being pompous should appear to them vulgar. Nor must they suppose that the words and actions which are narrated in the holy books, enveloped as they are and covered with carnal veils, are not to be explained and interpreted, but to be taken literally. They must also be taught the utility of this secret method whence mysteries derive their name, and how powerful the veils of figures are to awaken in us a love

of truth and to protect us against the disgust into which we are liable to fall. And this should be done when explaining some allegory which in its literal sense does not affect them so much.

To such as these it is most useful to know that sense is to be preferred to words, just as the soul is more excellent than the body. Hence they ought to prefer to hear discourses which are true rather than those which are eloquent, just as they ought to prefer to have wise rather than handsome friends. Let them also learn that the desires of the heart are the only voices which reach the ear of God, and then they will not be shocked if perchance they hear prelates and ministers of the Church using barbarisms and solecisms in addressing God in prayer, or not pronouncing in an intelligible manner the words they utter. Not that such things ought not to be corrected, so that the people may answer "Amen" to what they fully understand; yet they are to be piously tolerated by such as know that good speaking in the forum consists in the sound which is external, but in the church it consists in the desire of the heart. Hence, though the eloquence of the forum may be called good diction, it can never be called benediction.*

With regard to the sacramental rite to which they are about to be admitted, it is sufficient to explain to the more educated what it signifies. The more uneducated often require to have it explained by many words and similitudes in order that they may not despise the rite which they see.

* There is here a play on the words "bona dictio" and "benedictio."

CHAPTER X

How to catechize with Cheerfulness. Six Causes from which the Office of Catechist becomes irksome. Remedy for the first of these Causes

HERE perhaps you will ask me to give you a model of a discourse, to show you how the rules I have laid down are to be observed in practice. This with God's help I propose to do; but first I must, as I promised, make some remarks on the subject of cheerfulness. For I have already fulfilled my promise with respect to the rules to be observed in catechizing those who present themselves to become Christians. And indeed I am not bound to do in this volume what I lay down rules for doing. And if I do it, it shall be by way of supererogation. But how can I add the surplus until the measure is filled up? For the only point you particularly complained of was that your discourse seemed to you commonplace and uninteresting, when engaged in instructing any one in the Christian doctrine. Now this does not arise from want of matter, for with this you are abundantly provided; nor for want of skill in speaking; but from a disgust of mind arising either from the fact that, as I observed above:

1. The clear view which we contemplate in silence delights us more, and we do not wish to be withdrawn from it to seek expressions which fall far short of our conceptions.

2. Or it arises from the fact that even when we can speak with ease we prefer to read or to listen to something more elevated in style, which costs us no labour or thought, rather than to deliver a discourse off-hand, uncertain whether our expressions will be appropriate or be rightly understood.

3. Or again, this disgust comes from the fact that what is taught to the uninstructed is familiar to us and no longer necessary for our own advancement; and we find it irksome to return to such subjects frequently; and our mind which has grown to maturity no longer takes delight in them as being trite and suited to children.

4. Again, a passive hearer is irksome to one who speaks; [and this may happen either because he is unmoved by the sentiments, or because he does not manifest by any motion that he understands or is pleased with what is said];* not that we ought to be eager for human praise, but because those things which we minister belong to God. Now the more we love those whom we address the more desirous we are that they should be pleased with the instruction given them for their salvation. And if we do not succeed, we are saddened and enfeebled and dispirited as though our labours were fruitless.

5. Sometimes, too, when we are withdrawn from something we desire to perform, either because it pleases us or seems more necessary, and are compelled by the order of one whom we fear to displease, or by the earnest request of certain

* The words in brackets are wanting in several editions.

persons to catechize any one, we proceed with a disturbed mind to a function which requires great calmness, and we regret that we cannot adhere to the order of actions we had arranged for ourselves, or that we cannot meet all the calls upon us. Hence through that vexation our discourse is rendered less agreeable, because it flows less abundantly from a source dried up by sadness.

6. At other times our heart is filled with sadness by reason of some scandal, and at that moment some one addresses us saying: "Come and speak to this person who desires to be a Christian." This request is made by persons who know not our interior sorrow; and if duty obliges us not to disclose to them our feelings we undertake with reluctance what they desire, and our discourse is languid and wanting in attractiveness, since it flows from a heart which is agitated and disturbed. Whatever be the one from amongst these numerous causes which clouds the serenity of our mind, we must seek a supernatural remedy to remove the constraint, and to enable us to exult with fervour of spirit and rejoice with tranquillity in doing a good work. For "God loves a cheerful giver."*

But if the reason of our sadness be that our hearer does not understand what we say, and we are therefore forced to descend as it were from a higher level, and to spend time in expressions far beneath our conceptions, and to make an effort to express by long circumlocutions what the mind perceives with celerity; and because we do not fully succeed, we are loth to speak and

* 2 Cor. ix, 7.

prefer to be silent. In such circumstances let us think of Him "who set us an example that we may follow His footsteps."* For however much our expressions may be beneath our mental conceptions, human nature is much farther from being equal to the Divinity, yet [Jesus Christ] "being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal to God, but He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant . . . . even unto the death of the cross;"† and wherefore, but "that He became weak to the weak that He might gain the weak?"‡ Hearken also to His imitator, St Paul, saying elsewhere: "Whether we be transported in mind it is to God; or whether we be sober it is for you: for the charity of Christ presseth us: judging this, that One died for all."§ How would He have been ready to be spent for their souls if He were unwilling to stoop to the level of their intelligence? Hence He became "as a little one in the midst of them, as a nurse cherishing her children."‖ What pleasure is there in murmuring abbreviated and mutilated words, unless one is urged to it by love? Yet people desire to have children to speak to in this way; and a mother takes more delight in masticating and giving suitable nourishment to her child than in partaking of the more solid food which is suitable for herself. Let us not forget the parable of the hen covering her chickens with her drooping plumage, and calling them together by her cries, and how they fall a victim to birds of prey if they refuse to take refuge under her wings.¶ If, therefore, our intellect de-

* 1 Peter ii, 21. † Phil. ii, 7, 8. ‡ 1 Cor. ix, 22.
§ 2 Cor. v, 13, 14. ‖ 1 Thess. ii, 7. ¶ Matt. xxiii, 37.

lights in the contemplation of truth, let us also call to mind that the more zealously charity descends to what is lowly, the more vigorously it returns to that which is interior, through the consciousness of not seeking anything from those to whom it descends, except the salvation of their souls.

CHAPTER XI

A Remedy against the Second cause of Want of Cheerfulness in Catechizing

BUT if we prefer to read or listen to a discourse carefully prepared, and are loth to speak because we are uncertain of success, we ought to bear in mind that, provided we do not deviate from truth, should any expression displease our hearer, he will learn from that very fact that the expression, though incomplete and inappropriate, matters but little if the doctrine be understood. For the expressions are only useful to render the doctrine intelligible. And should some incorrect expression escape us through human infirmity—though this is improbable in the beaten path of catechizing the ignorant—yet, provided the hearer be not scandalized, we should feel assured that God has permitted this to try whether we would correct our mistake with calmness or allow ourselves to be precipitated into a greater error by defending the error into which we had already fallen. But if no one tells us of our mistake, and it escapes our own notice and that of our audience, there is no occasion to be distressed, provided we do not fall into it again.

Now it sometimes happens that in thinking over what we have said we discover some mistake, and are uncertain how it has been understood by those who heard us; and if we find that it was

well received we are filled with greater pain in proportion as our charity is great. Therefore, as we blame ourselves in secret, so if an opportunity arises we must take care to disabuse those who may have been led into error, not by the word of God, but by our own. And if some persons, blinded by foolish envy, rejoice at our mistake, such as tale-bearers, detractors hateful to God,* they afford us an opportunity of practising patience and mercy, for the patience of God leads them to repentance. For what is more detestable, what more effectually treasures up wrath against the day of wrath and the revelation of the just judgement of God, than to rejoice like the devil at another's evil?

Sometimes, too, it happens that though the correct doctrine has been duly stated, some point which has not been understood or which is opposed to current errors offends or disturbs the hearer, because it is new to him or seems severe. Should this be noticed, he should, if docile, be set right by reason and authority. But if he is silent about his difficulty, and keeps it secret, it can only be remedied by the action of God. And if he withdraws and is unwilling to be corrected, let the example of our Lord be our consolation, for when men took offence at His words and went away because they were hard, He said to those who remained, "Will you also go away?"† And we ought to hold it as a fixed and unalterable principle that in the course of ages the captive Jerusalem is being set free from the Babylon of this world, and that none of its

* Rom. i, 30. † John vi, 67.

citizens shall perish, for they who perish were not of it. "For the sure foundation of God standeth firm, having this seal: The Lord knoweth who are His, and let every one depart from iniquity that nameth the name of the Lord."* If we think on this, and invoke the Lord to come into our hearts, we shall be less concerned about the uncertain success of our discourse in consequence of the varying impressions of the hearers; and if we seek not our own glory we shall feel joy at suffering annoyance in the performance of a work of mercy. For a work is then truly good when the intention of him who performs it springs from charity and, returning again as it were to its own place, rests in charity. And with respect to the reading or listening to a discourse, the desire of which caused us to speak with reluctance and disgust, we shall return to it with greater alacrity and perform it with greater pleasure when our labour is finished; and we shall pray with greater confidence that God may speak to us as we desire if we joyfully allow Him to speak through us to the best of our power. Thus it shall come to pass that "to them that love God all things shall work together unto good." †

* 2 Tim. ii, 19. † Rom. viii, 28.

CHAPTER XII

Remedy against the Third Cause of Want of Cheerfulness in Catechizing

But if our disgust arises from the frequent repetition of subjects which are trite and adapted to children, let us become like children by fraternal, paternal and maternal love, and when we are united to them by affection these subjects will appear to us new. For such is the force of sympathy that what we teach and what they learn affects both alike, and we dwell in each other, and hence they teach, so to say, in us what they learn, and we learn in them what we teach. Is not this what happens when we show to persons who have never before seen them certain beautiful scenes in town or country, which we ourselves now pass by unmoved from seeing them often? Our delight is renewed by the pleasure they feel in those things which are new to them. And the more we love them the more we are delighted, because, the more closely we are united to them by the bond of love, the more those things which were old become new to us also. And if we have made some progress in contemplation, we do not desire that they whom we love should rejoice and be filled with admiration at the sight of the works of man; but we desire to raise up their thoughts to the skill and wisdom of Him who made them, and thence to

admiration and praise of God, who made all things; that is, to the most salutary end of charity.

How much more, then, ought we to rejoice when men come to be instructed concerning God, for whose sake everything that is worthy of learning ought to be learned, and to feel a new pleasure in the knowledge which is new to them, and to be stirred up to new energy and fervour by the unwonted attention they pay, even if our discourse has grown colder than usual! It will also serve to increase our joy if we consider from what a death of error the hearer is transferred to the light of faith. And if we proceed along our accustomed paths with benevolent joy when we have put on the right road a traveller who had gone astray, with how much greater joy and alacrity ought we to pass along the path of salutary doctrine, even when it treats of matters no longer necessary for ourselves, since we thereby lead a poor soul wearied by straying in the errors of the world back to the paths of peace, in compliance with the injunction of Him who has conferred that gift upon ourselves.

CHAPTER XIII

Remedy against the Fourth Cause of Want of Cheerfulness in Catechizing

In truth, it is difficult to go on speaking when one perceives that the hearer is unmoved, either because from religious awe or from human respect he does not venture to signify his approval by words or external signs, or because he does not understand, or because he despises what we say.

But since the reason is uncertain, as we cannot see his mind, every effort should be made to rouse him and draw him forth, as it were, from his hiding-place. The excessive fear which hinders him from expressing his sentiments should be dispelled by gentle exhortation, and his bashfulness overcome by impressing on him the fraternal affection we bear him, and by asking him whether he understands; and his confidence should be excited by encouraging him to state freely the objections which may occur to him. He should also be asked whether he has heard these subjects treated before, for perhaps they make but little impression on him on account of their being well-known and familiar; and according to the nature of his reply we should speak either more diffusely or more concisely, or refute the erroneous opinions he entertains, or explain, not with diffuseness but with brevity,

what he already knows, or select some allegory from the Scripture, especially from the historical books, and explain and develop it to render our discourse more interesting.* But if he is excessively dull and is not aroused by these methods, we must bear with him patiently, and passing rapidly over the other points we must teach him what is most necessary concerning the unity of the Catholic Church,† concerning temptations and the duties of a Christian life and the terrors of the judgement to come, and we should rather speak much to God for him than speak much to him of God.

It often happens too that one who listened with pleasure at the commencement, being fatigued by the length of the discourse or by standing, no longer expresses his approval, but yawns and shows, even against his will, that he desires to go away. When we notice this, we should try to arouse his attention either by saying something seasoned with becoming hilarity and suited to the subject, or by narrating something extraordinary and strange, or something to excite sorrow and regret, and which applies to himself that he may be excited by his own interest. Yet in this we should take care not to alarm him by severity, but rather to gain him by kindness: or we should come to his relief by offering him a seat; and, without doubt, it were better where it can be done conveniently that the

* For "dulcescat" another reading is "dilucescat," "to become more clear."

† The word in the text is "Catholicæ," which is to be understood with the elipsis Ecclesiæ. The Louvain edit. reads "Catholicæ fidei."

hearer should be seated from the commencement. The practice in some churches abroad is far better, where not only do the bishops speak sitting, but they also provide benches for the people, lest any one who is infirm should be wearied by standing, and distracted from salutary attention, or even compelled to go away. Yet it makes a great difference whether it be a person belonging to the body of the faithful and already incorporated in the Church by the reception of the sacraments that withdraws through fatigue, or whether it be one who has not yet been admitted to the first sacramental rites that goes away overpowered with sheer fatigue lest he should fall, and yet feels ashamed to say why he leaves, but cannot remain standing through fatigue. I say this from experience, for once when I was instructing a peasant he went away, and from this instance I learned the necessity of providing against such a contingency. For who can put up with our arrogance if we do not cause our brethren, or what is still more important those who come in order to be our brethren, to be seated in our presence, whereas our Lord, whom the angels attend, allowed a woman to sit and listen to Him?* If, however, the discourse be short, or if the place be not suitable for sitting, the hearers may remain standing, if they are numerous and are not persons who come to be initiated. But when there are only two or three or a few who come to be received as Christians, it is a great risk to keep them standing. Yet if we have commenced

* Luke x, 39.

to speak to them while they are standing, as soon at least as we perceive their fatigue, we should offer them a seat, and even insist on their sitting down; and we should say something to renew their attention and divert their thoughts from any anxiety which may distract them. For, as the reason why the hearer listens in silence and without interest is uncertain, as soon as he is seated we should say something either in a joyful or grave tone to dispel the engrossing thoughts of secular business, so that if it be such thoughts that disturb him they may depart, being accused, as it were, by name; but if such be not the case, for we are ignorant of the cause, and if it is by listening to the discourse he is fatigued, his attention will be aroused from listlessness as soon as we say something unexpected or unusual in the manner I have mentioned. But such observations should be brief—the more so as they are digressions, in order that the remedy may not increase the disease it was intended to cure; then the points of the instruction must be gone through rapidly, and we must promise to conclude speedily and keep our promise.

CHAPTER XIV

Remedies against the Fifth and Sixth Causes of Want of Cheerfulness in Catechizing

BUT if it be the omission of some important duty in which you were engaged that disturbs your mind and renders it irksome to you to catechize, you ought to recollect that with the exception of the assurance we have that whatever we do to men through a motive of sincere charity should be done in the spirit of charity—with this exception it is uncertain what is most useful for us to do, or what it is most opportune either to interrupt or omit altogether. For as the merits before God of those whom we instruct are unknown to us, we know not what is expedient for them at the moment, or at least we only guess at it on the slenderest and most uncertain evidence. Wherefore we should arrange our actions to the best of our ability; and if we succeed in performing them in the order arranged, we should rejoice not because it has pleased us, but because it has pleased God that they should be so performed. But if any necessity arises to disturb that order, let us bend readily rather than break, and make the order which God prefers our own. For it is more reasonable that we should do His will than that He should do ours.

And as for the order of actions which we desire to adopt, that order should be preferred in

which the more important take precedence. Why then do we feel sad that God takes precedence of man, and why by being attached to our own order, do we desire to become inordinate? For no one orders his actions well, who is not more ready to omit what is forbidden by divine authority, than to do what by human forethought he had resolved on. For "there are many thoughts in the heart of man, but the will of the Lord shall stand firm." *

But if our mind is disturbed by reason of some scandal, and on that account we are unable to deliver a calm and agreeable discourse, our charity ought to be so great towards those for whom Christ died, willing by His blood to deliver them from the death of worldly errors, that the very fact that word is brought to us, while we are sad, that some persons have come desiring to be Christians, should be enough to console us and dispel our sadness, just as joy on account of gain is wont to soothe the pain caused by loss. In the case of scandal we are grieved, because we believe or see that the scandal-giver perishes or that the weak perish through him. The hope then that the person who comes to be instructed will make progress ought to efface our grief for him that has fallen. And if the fear occurs to our mind that the proselyte may become "a child of hell," † a thing of which there are many examples, and from which arise the scandals that afflict us, this should not discourage us. Rather it should encourage and spur us on to admonish the

* Prov. xix, 21. † Matt. xxiii, 15.

neophyte to beware of imitating those who are Christians not in reality but in name only, and should make us warn him not to be influenced by their number, either to imitate them, or on their account not to follow Christ, or to be unwilling to belong to the Church of God to which they belong, or to be willing to be therein such as they are. And somehow our discourse when inspired by present grief is wont to be more earnest. Far from being dull by reason of our grief, we deliver with more fire and earnestness what we would otherwise have delivered in a cold and unimpassioned manner, and we rejoice that an opportunity is offered us whereby our emotion becomes productive of good. But if our sadness arise from our having committed some fault or sin, we should not only call to mind that "a contrite heart is a sacrifice to the Lord,"* but also the words, "Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sin";† and again, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice."‡ If we were in danger from fire, we would fly to water to extinguish it, and would rejoice if any one near us supplied us with it; so if we are filled with alarm because from our frail nature the flame of sin has arisen, we should rejoice when an opportunity of performing a work of charity is offered us, just as if we had found a fountain to quench the conflagration. Nor must we imagine that we ought to run with greater alacrity with bread to appease corporal hunger than with the word of God to instruct the mind of him who makes it his food§ Moreover, since

* Ps. l, 19. † Ecclus iii, 33. ‡ Matt. ix, 13.

§ For "Mentem istud edentis," the Louvain Edition has "Mentem studentis."

the advantage of the action is so great, even though there were no sin in omitting it, it would be a misfortune, to the detriment not of our neighbour's salvation but of our own, to spurn the proffered remedy.

But when we consider the threat uttered by our Lord: "Wicked and slothful servant, thou oughtest to have committed my money to the bankers!"* what folly is it, through grief for our sins, to be prepared to sin again by not giving the talent of the Lord to him that desires and asks for it! By such thoughts and reflections let us dispel the cloud of sadness, and apply ourselves to give instruction in such a manner that it may be received with pleasure, because it flows copiously and cheerfully from the fountain of charity. This is not my advice but rather that which is dictated to all by the "charity which is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us."†

* Matt. xxv, 26. † Rom. v, 5.

CHAPTER XV

The Style of the Instruction should vary with the Quality of the Person addressed

But now perhaps you demand as due what was not due before I promised it, namely, that I should set before you a specimen of a discourse such as I should deliver if I were actually catechizing. Before I proceed to this, I desire you to observe that the manner of one who dictates something to be read is different from that of one who adresses an audience. In the latter case too there is a difference whether one speaks by way of admonition in private, with none present to criticize what is said, or whether one addresses in public an audience consisting of persons of various sentiments.

And here again the style is different if only one person is instructed, while others who are familiar with the subject are present as critics and spectators, and different again when the discourse is practical for all present; and again it makes a difference whether the discourse be delivered after the manner of a dialogue or whether all attend in silence while one speaks from the pulpit. And in such cases it makes a difference whether the audience consists of few or many, whether it be made up of persons who are learned or unlearned, of townsfolk or peasants, or of all classes at once. For these circumstances cannot fail to affect the speaker in various ways, and the discourse

which bears as it were the impress of his mind, cannot but affect the audience in different ways, since they themselves mutually affect each other in various ways by their presence. As for myself, in instructing the ignorant I confess that I am differently affected, according as the person I see before me to be catechized is learned or unlearned, a fellow-citizen or a stranger, rich or poor, a private individual or one in rank and authority, or a person of such or such a race, age or sex, or who comes from such or such a school or sect; and according as are my feelings the character of my discourse varies in its beginning, continuation and conclusion. For though the same charity is due to all, the same remedy is not applicable to all. Charity is in labour* to bring forth some, is weak† with others, takes pains to edify others, fears to offend some, stoops to others and raises itself up to others. To some it is gentle, to others severe, to none an enemy, to all a mother.

And whoever has not in the same spirit of charity experienced this, he thinks me fortunate when he sees the people manifesting their pleasure and their applause of the talent given to me. But may it please Him "before whom the sighing of the prisoners comes in,"‡ "to see my abjection and my labours, and forgive me all my sins."§ Wherefore if my discourses so please you that you ask for a model to imitate in your own, you would better obtain what you desire by coming to listen to me when I instruct than by reading what I here write.

* Gal. iv, 19. † 2 Cor. xi, 29. ‡ Ps. lxxviii, 11. § Ps. xxiv, 18.

CHAPTER XVI

Specimen of a Catechetical Instruction

But, in fine, let us suppose the case that some one presents himself desiring to be a Christian, and belonging to the class of the uninstructed; not, however, a man from the country but from the town, and such as you must often meet with in Carthage; and that he has been asked whether it is for some advantage of the present life or for the sake of the rest of the future life that he desires to be a Christian; and let us further suppose that he has answered that it is for sake of the happiness to come. We would perchance instruct him in the following manner:

Thanks be to God, dear brother, I sincerely congratulate you and rejoice for your sake, seeing that, amid the great and dangerous tempests of this life, you have fixed your thoughts on true and certain rest. Even in this life men undergo great labours to obtain rest and security; but as they are led astray by evil passions, they do not find it. For they desire to have rest in restless and transient things, and, as these are taken from them by time and pass away, they are agitated with fear and sorrow, which allow them no rest. For if a man desire to have his rest in riches, he becomes proud but not happy. Do we not see that many lose their wealth on a sudden? that many, too, lose their lives on account of riches,

either through the effort to obtain them or because they are overcome and robbed by persons more covetous than themselves? And even did riches abide with a man during his whole life and not abandon their possessor, at his death he would abandon them. What is a man's life, even should he reach old age? Or when men desire length of days, what do they desire but lengthened infirmity? So with the honours of the world. What are they but pride and vanity,* accompanied by the risk of downfall? For thus saith the Scripture: "All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flowers of the field. The grass is withered, and the flower is fallen . . . . but the word of the Lord endureth for ever."† He, therefore, who desires true rest and happiness should detach his hopes from mortal and fleeting things and fix them on the word of God, that cleaving to that which abides for ever he too may abide for ever with it.

Others again do not seek to become rich, nor do they ambition the vain display of honours; but they desire to rejoice and have their rest in taverns, in fornications, in theatres and in the empty shows which they enjoy gratis in large cities. But they spend in wastefulness the little means they possess; and from poverty they go on to theft and burglary and even to public robbery, and forthwith they are filled with great alarm; and they who a little before sang in taverns have their imagination haunted with the thought of the lamentations of a prison.

By their love for the public shows they be-

* Some editions omit *vanitas*. † Isa. xl, 6.

come like demons, urging on, by their applause, men who have done each other no injury to slay each other and to mutual contests for the gratification of a maddened populace. And if they perceive that the combatants are in concord, then they hate and persecute them, and demand with shouts that they be scourged as being in collusion, and they force the judge, whose function it is to punish guilt, to perpetrate this iniquity.

But if they perceive that they are animated by deadly enmity against each other, whether they be those who are called sintæ,* or actors or dancers, or charioteers or gladiators—and these last they urge on to combat, not only men against men, but men against wild beasts—the more they perceive them to rage in mutual discord, the more they hold them in favour and are pleased with them, applaud them when urged on, and urge them on by applause. And the spectators, taking sides one for one and another for another, become more maddened against each other than are the combatants, whose fury they frantically provoke, and in their frenzy delight in beholding. How then can the mind that delights in discord and contests enjoy the blessing of peace?

In fine, though vain joys are not joys, yet, be they what they may, however great be the enjoyment arising from the boasting of riches, the pride of honours, the indulgence of taverns, the combats of theatres, the uncleanness of fornication, the gratification of baths, one slight attack of fever takes all away, and robs such persons while yet alive of all their happiness. There remains but

* The Benedictine edition has "sintæ," which is believed to be an African word. The Louvain edition reads "athletæ."

a void and guilty conscience, which shall have God for judge whom it would not have as guardian, and will find a severe master in Him whom it refused to seek and love as a tender father. But as for you who seek the rest promised to Christians in the next life, you will experience a sweet and pleasant rest even amidst the most bitter trials of the present life. For you will perceive that the fruits of justice are sweeter than those of iniquity, and that a good conscience brings truer and greater joy in the midst of sufferings than a bad one in the midst of delights. For it is not for the sake of any temporal advantage that you have come to be admitted into the Church.

CHAPTER XVII

One should become a Christian not for Temporal Advantage, but for sake of the Rewards of the Future Life

FOR there are persons who desire to become Christians either because they hope to gain favour with men from whom they expect some temporal advantage, or because they are unwilling to offend those whom they fear. Such as these are reprobates, and if the Church tolerates them for a time, as the threshing-floors bears the chaff until the time of winnowing,* unless they amend and begin to be Christians for sake of the happiness to come, they shall be separated in the end. Let them not deceive themselves by reason of their being on the threshing-floor with the wheat of God, for they shall not be with it in the granary, but they shall be cast into the fire, which they deserve.

There are others who have better hopes, but are in no less danger; men who fear God and do not mock the Christian name, nor enter the Church of God with hypocritical intent; but they seek their happiness in this life, and to be more prosperous than those who do not worship God. Hence when they see the wicked and the impious of this world prosperous and powerful, while they

* Matt. iii, 12.

themselves possess little or lose what they have, they are filled with surprise, as though they served God in vain, and they easily fall away from the faith. But the man who desires to be a Christian for sake of the everlasting happiness and the eternal rest which is promised to the saints after this life, and in order to escape being cast into everlasting fire with the devil, and to secure an entrance into eternal rest with Christ—such a man is truly a Christian. He is on his guard in all temptations, not to be corrupted by prosperity or cast down by adversity; in the abundance of earthly goods he is temperate and moderate, and in tribulations strong and patient. He makes progress, and arrives at such a disposition of mind that he loves God more than he fears hell; and did God say to him, "Enjoy sensual pleasures for ever, sin as much as you are able; you shall not die, you shall not be cast into hell, only with Me you shall not be," he would be filled with horror, and would refrain from sin, not to escape punishment, but in order not to offend Him whom he loves; in whom alone is rest, "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love Him." *

Concerning this rest the Scripture testifies and is not silent that in the beginning of the world, when God "made heaven and earth and all things in them," † six days He worked and "on the seventh He rested." ‡ For the Almighty might have created all things in one moment. He did not labour that He might

* 1 Cor. ii, 9. † Gen. i, 1; Acts xiv, 14. ‡ Gen. ii, 2.

rest, "for He spoke and they were made; He commanded and they were created;"* but that He might give us to understand that after the six ages of this world, in the seventh age, as it were on the seventh day, He will rest in His saints; because then they shall rest in Him, after all the works by which they served Him and which He worked in them, who calls and commands, and forgives past transgressions, and justifies him who before was impious. For they are rightly said to work when by His gift they do good; so, when they rest, He is rightly said to rest in them. For, as for Him, He needs not rest, for He feels not labour. He made all things by His word, and His word is Christ, in whom the angels and all the most pure heavenly spirits rest in holy silence. But man, fallen by sin, lost the rest which he possessed in His divinity, and recovered it in His humanity: and therefore at the time which He knew to be opportune, He became man and was born of a woman. For He could not be defiled by the flesh, since He was come to purify the flesh. The ancient saints, by the revelation of the Holy Ghost, knew and prophesied that He was to come; and they were saved by believing that He was to come, as we are saved by believing that He has come; and this happened that we might love God, who so loved us as to send His only Son, to put on the humility of our human nature, and suffer death at the hands of sinners and on behalf of sinners. For from the very beginning of the world this mystery ceased not to be prefigured and foretold.

* Ps. cxiviii, 5.

CHAPTER XVIII

What Faith teaches with regard to the Creation

FOR God, who is omnipotent, and good, and just and merciful, who made all things good, both great and small, high and low—such as are visible, like the heavens and the earth and sea, and in the heavens the sun and moon and stars; on the earth or in the sea, trees, plants and animals according to their kind, and all bodies whether celestial or terrestrial; and such, too, as are invisible, like the spirits which impart to bodies life and growth—made also man to His own image; that as He Himself, by His omnipotence, is over all created things, so man, by his intelligence whereby he knows and worships his Creator, should preside over all living things upon the earth. He made woman also to be his helpmate—not for carnal concupiscence, for as yet they had not corruptible bodies until death laid hold of them in punishment of sin—but that the man should have glory from the woman, by leading her to God and by acting as an example for her to imitate in holiness and piety, just as he himself is the glory of God when he follows the dictates of His wisdom.

Therefore He placed them in a place of perpetual beatitude, which the Scriptures call Paradise, and gave them a commandment with the condition that if they did not transgress it

they should always remain happy and immortal, but if they transgressed they should undergo the penalty of death. God foreknew that they would transgress; yet, as He is the designer and maker of all good, He made them, for He made even the beasts, in order to fill the world with terrestrial goods (and of a truth man, even when a sinner, is better than a beast); and He gave them a commandment, though He knew they would not keep it, that they might be inexcusable when He began to punish them.

Whatsoever man did, in his works he found God worthy of praise; if he did right, he found Him worthy of praise in the justice of His rewards; if he sinned, he found Him worthy of praise in the justice of His punishments; if confessing his sins he returned to an upright life, he found Him worthy of praise in the indulgence of His mercy.

Why then should God not create man though He foreknew that he would sin, since He purposed to crown him if steadfast, to correct him if he fell, to assist him to rise again? For He is Himself glorious for His goodness, justice and mercy; and, moreover, He foreknew that from the race of men would spring saints who would seek not their own glory but that of their Creator, and who, freed from all corruption, would by worshipping Him merit to live for ever in happiness with the holy angels.

For He who gave free will to man that he might serve God, not from servile necessity but from free choice, gave that faculty to the angels also; and, therefore, the angel who, with the spirits that followed him, through pride abandoned obedience to God and became a devil, injured

not God but himself; for God knew how to set in order the souls * that deserted Him, and how by their just punishment to regulate the inferior part of creation by most wise and appropriate laws of wonderful dispensation. Therefore, neither did the devil do any injury to God by his fall and by seducing mankind to ruin, nor did man himself in aught diminish the truth, power and happiness of his Creator, when, along with his spouse † who had been already deceived by the devil, he freely consented to do what Godhad forbidden.

For by the most just laws of God they were all condemned, while God remained glorious by the equity of the punishment, and they were rendered ignominious by the disgrace of the penalty; and in consequence man, having abandoned his Creator, was made subject to the devil, and the devil was set up as an object to be overcome by man when converted; that whoever should be found in agreement with the devil until the end, should go with him into everlasting punishment; and whosoever should humble himself to God and by His grace overcome the devil, should merit an everlasting reward.

* In his *Retractationes*, lib. II, xiv, St Augustine corrects the expression in the text thus: "Novit enim Deus ordinare deserentes se animas: convenientius diceretur deserentes se spiritus, quoniam de angelis agebatur."

† Gen. iii, 6.

CHAPTER XIX

In the Church are to be found Good and Bad. At the Last Day the Good and Bad shall be separated

Nor should it surprise us that many follow the devil and few adhere to God, because the grain is not so plentiful as the chaff. But as the husbandman knows what to do with a large heap of chaff, so a multitude of sinners is of no account before God, who knows what to do with them in order that the administration of His kingdom be nowise disturbed or disfigured. Nor must the devil be thought on that account to have prevailed, because he has drawn many after him, since he and his followers are conquered by a few. Two cities, therefore, one of the wicked and the other of the saints, are in existence from the beginning of the world to the end, and are now mingled with each other corporally, though divided in will; but at the day of judgement they shall be separated in body also. For all men who love pride, temporal rule, vain display and the pomp of arrogance—and all the spirits that love such things and seek their glory in prevailing over men—are united in one society; and though they often contend with each other for these things, they are, nevertheless, precipitated into the same abyss by the same weight of covetousness, and are bound together by like morals and deserts.

Again, all men and all spirits that humbly seek the glory of God and not their own, and serve Him in piety, belong to one society. Yet God is most merciful and patient towards sinful men, and allows them time to repent and amend. For on the occasion when He destroyed all in the deluge except one just man with his family, whom He willed to preserve though He knew that men would not amend, yet while the ark was building for one hundred years, the fact that the anger of God was to come upon them was preached to them, and had they been converted He would have spared them, as He spared Ninive when it did penance, though He had foretold its destruction by a prophet.

And God did this even to those who He knew would persevere in their wickedness, giving them time to do penance in order to exercise and form us to patience by His own example, that we might know how patiently we should bear with the wicked, as we know not what they shall be hereafter, since He spares them and suffers them to live, though none of these things is hidden from Him.

In the mystery of the deluge, in which the just were saved by the wood, we have a figure of the Church to come, which its King and God raised up from the deluge of the world by the mystery of His cross.

Yet even after this, malice did not cease to spring up again through pride and lust and lawless impiety. Men deserting their Creator not only fell down before the creature which God had made, and worshipped as God what God had created, but they bowed down their souls to the

works of the hand of man and the handiwork of artificers; and in this the devil and the demons triumphed more shamefully, for nourishing their own error by the error of men they rejoiced that they were adored in such emblems.

And there were not wanting then just men who piously sought God and overcame the pride of the devil, true citizens of the heavenly city, who were healed by the humility of Christ, its King, revealed to them by the Holy Ghost. From amongst these Abraham,* a pious and a faithful servant, was chosen, that the mystery of the Son of God might be made known to him, and that by imitating his faith all the faithful of all generations might be called his children. From him sprang a nation by whom the true God, who made heaven and earth, was worshipped, while the other nations worshipped idols and demons.

In that people the Church was prefigured still more clearly. There was there the carnal multitude, who worshipped God for the sake of visible blessings. There were there, too, a few who took thought of the rest to come, and sought the heavenly country. And to these was revealed in prophecy the future humility of God, our King and Lord, Jesus Christ, that by faith in Him they might be healed from all pride and vain-glory. And in the saints who preceded in time the nativity of our Lord, not only their conversation, but their life, their marriages, their children, and their actions were a prophecy of the present time when, through faith in the

* Gen. xii, 3.

passion of Christ, Christians are gathered together from amongst the gentiles. Through these holy patriarchs and prophets the carnal nation, afterwards called the Jews, received visible benefits which they looked for from the Lord, and also correction and corporal punishment to inspire them with fear for a time, as befitted the hardness of their hearts. And in all these things spiritual mysteries were signified pertaining to Christ and to the Church, whose members those saints were, though they lived before the birth of Christ. For the only-begotten Son of God, the Word of the Father, equal and co-eternal with Him, by whom all things were made, became man for our sake, that He might be the head of the Church, as it were of the whole body. But when man is born, even though the hand should first appear, yet it is joined and united to the head and to the whole body, as happened at the birth of some of the patriarchs. So, too, all the saints who were on earth before the birth of Christ, though born before Him, were yet united to the whole body of which He is the head.

CHAPTER XX

The Deliverance of the Jews from the Bondage of Egypt and their Passage through the Red Sea were typical of the Church

THAT people, then, migrated into Egypt and served a most cruel king; and having been chastened by severe labours, they sought God as their liberator. And there was sent to them one of their own nation—the holy servant of God, Moses—who, by divine power, struck the impious nation of the Egyptians with fear, and led forth the people of God across the Red Sea, whose waters divided and made a way for them to pass through. The Egyptians, on the other hand, as they followed after, were overwhelmed by the returning waters and perished.* Thus, as in the deluge the earth was purified by water from the iniquity of sinners, who perished in that flood while the just were saved by the wood, so the people of God, going forth from Egypt, found a way through the waters by which their enemies were destroyed. Nor was the mystery of the wood wanting, for Moses struck the sea with his rod to accomplish that miracle. Both these events are figures of holy baptism, by which the faithful pass to a new life, while their sins—as it were enemies—are destroyed and perish.

* Exod. vii, 1; viii, 1; xiv, 22.

The passion of Christ was more clearly prefigured in that nation when they were commanded to slay and eat a lamb, and to sign their door-posts with its blood, and to celebrate this rite every year and call it the Pasch of the Lord.* Now the prophecy says most manifestly of our Lord that He shall "be led as a sheep to the slaughter."† And it is with the sign of His passion and cross you are to be signed this day on the forehead—as it were on the door-post—and with this sign all Christians are signed. After that the people were led for forty years through the desert.‡ They also received the Law written by the finger of God,§ by which expression is signified the Holy Ghost, as is manifestly declared in the Gospel.‖ For God is not limited by the form of a body, nor are members and fingers to be imagined in Him as we see them in ourselves. But the Holy Ghost is called the finger of God, because through Him the gifts of God are distributed to the saints who, though their powers are different, do not depart from the concord of charity. For in the fingers there appears a certain division and yet no separation from unity; but whether it is for this or some other reason that the Holy Ghost is called the finger of God, when we hear that epithet we ought not to picture to ourselves the form of a human body.

That people, then, received the law written by the finger of God upon tables of stone to signify the hardness of their hearts, for they

* Exod. xii, 7. † Isa. liii, 7. ‡ Deut. xxix, 5.
§ Deut. ix, 10. ‖ Luke xi, 20.

were not to fulfil the law. For as they desired corporal gifts from the Lord, they were governed by carnal fear rather than by charity; for charity alone fulfils the law. Therefore they were burdened by many visible rites, as with a servile yoke, in the observance of kinds of meats,* and in the sacrifices of animals and innumerable other things, which, however, were the figures of spiritual things pertaining to our Lord Jesus Christ and to the Church. These things were understood by a few, and were profitable to their salvation, and were observed by them according to the fitness of times; but by the multitude they were observed only and were not understood. Thus by many various signs of things to come, which are too numerous to relate, and which we now see fulfilled in the Church, that people was led into the promised land, in which they held sway carnally and temporally, according to their desires; and their kingdom was a figure of the kingdom which is spiritual. There Jerusalem was founded, the far-famed city of God—a figure of the city which is free, and is styled the heavenly Jerusalem,† a Hebrew word which signifies the vision of peace. Its citizens are all the holy men who have been, who are and who shall be, and all the holy spirits who in the highest heavens obey God with loving devotion, and do not imitate the impious pride of the devil and his angels. Of this city the king is our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, by whom the highest angels are governed; and the Word took flesh, that by

* Heb. xiii, 9. † Gal. iv, 26.

Him men also might be governed, who shall all reign with Him in everlasting peace. Of this king the most prominent type in that earthly kingdom was David, of whose seed was descended the most true king, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is over all things God blessed for ever.* Many other events took place in that land of promise which were figures of Christ, who was to come, and of His Church; but these you may learn by degrees by reading the holy Scriptures.

* Rom. ix, 5.

CHAPTER XXI

What was typified by the Captivity of Babylon

After a few generations another typical event occurred, which is appropriate to our subject. For that city was made captive, and a great number of its inhabitants were led away to Babylon. Now, as Jerusalem signifies the city of the saints, so Babylon signifies the city and society of the wicked, for its name means confusion. Both these cities—which have existed from the creation of man, and will exist to the end, blended together in the course of ages, but destined to be separated at the last judgement—have already been mentioned above. When that city was made captive, and its people led away to Babylon, they were directed by God through Jeremias, a prophet of that time, to submit to slavery.* And there were kings of Babylon, under whom they were in slavery,† and who by reason of them were influenced by certain miracles, and in consequence came to a knowledge of the true God, and worshipped Him and commanded Him to be worshipped. They were bidden also to pray for those by whom they were held captive, and to hope for peace in their peace, to rear up children, to build houses, to plant gardens and vineyards. And freedom after the lapse of seventy years was promised them.

* Jer. xxix, 4, 5. † Dan. iv, 34; Ibid. vi, 26.

Now all this signified in figure that the Church of Christ in all His saints, who are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, was one day to serve under the kings of this world. For the apostle teaches, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," and "render to all men their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom,"* and the other things which, saving the honour we owe to God, we render to the princes of civil society; for our Lord Himself, to give an example of sound doctrine, did not disdain to pay tribute for Himself in His human nature. Slaves, too, who are good and faithful Christians, are commanded to serve their masters with joy and fidelity, for they shall one day judge them if they continue wicked unto the end; and they shall reign with them if they be converted to the true God. All are commanded to be subject to the rulers of this world, until the appointed time signified by the seventy years, when the Church, like Jerusalem, shall be set free from the confusion of this world as from the captivity of Babylon. By reason of this captivity the kings of the earth, themselves abandoning the idols for whose sake they persecuted the Christians, have come to the knowledge of the one true God, and Christ the Lord, and do worship Them; and for them, even when they persecuted the Church, the Apostle Paul ordered prayers to be said, for he speaks thus: "I desire therefore, first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for kings, for all men, and for all that are in high

* Rom. xiii, 1, 7.

station; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all piety and charity."* Therefore by them peace, though but temporal, was granted to the Church, temporal tranquillity to build up spiritual houses, and plant gardens and vineyards. For behold by preaching the word we build and we plant. And this is done throughout the whole world with the sanction of Christian kings, according to the words of the same apostle, "You are God's husbandry; you are God's building." †

And after the seventy years,‡ which Jeremias mystically prophesied to signify the end of time, another type was given, and the building of the temple of God was renewed in Jerusalem. But, because all happened to them in figures, a lasting peace and liberty was not granted to the Jews. They were therefore afterwards conquered and made tributary by the Romans.

From the period when they took possession of the land of promise, and had kings of their own, Christ was more clearly foretold in many prophecies, that they might not suppose that in any of their kings the promise of the Redeemer Christ was fulfilled. And this was prophesied not only by David in the book of Psalms, but by other great and holy prophets also, until the captivity of Babylon; and during the captivity there were prophets who foretold the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of all. And after the seventy years, when the temple

* 1 Tim. ii, 1, 2. The Vulgate puts the clause "pro omnibus hominibus" before "pro regibus," and concludes with the word "castitate."

† 1 Cor. iii, 9. ‡ Jer. xxix, 10.

was restored, so many tribulations did the Jews endure from the kings of the nations, that they understood that the Liberator was not yet come; yet they did not understand that He would set them free spiritually, but they desired His coming as their Liberator according to the flesh.

CHAPTER XXII

The Six Ages of the World. The Incarnation, Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

FIVE ages of the world then had passed. The first is reckoned from the origin of the human race, that is from Adam, who was the first man, to Noe, who built the ark at the deluge.* The second is from that time to Abraham, who was called the father of all nations,† who should imitate his faith, as well as of his carnal posterity, the nation of the Jews, who, before the Gentiles embraced the Christian faith, alone among all the nations of the earth worshipped one God; and from whom Christ, the Saviour, was to come according to the flesh. These two points concerning these two ages are prominent in the books of the Old Testament. The other three are mentioned in the Gospel,‡ when the origin of our Lord according to the flesh is spoken of. For the third is from Abraham to David, the fourth from David to the captivity, in which the people of God were carried away to Babylon, the fifth from the captivity to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. From His coming the sixth age is reckoned, and now the spiritual grace which was known to a few patriarchs and prophets is

* Gen. vi, 22. † Gen. xvii, 4. ‡ Matt. i, 17.

made manifest to all nations; in order that no man may serve God otherwise than freely, nor expect from Him the visible rewards of servitude and the happiness of the present life, but may look forward to eternal life alone, in which God Himself is enjoyed; and that in this sixth age the mind of man may be renewed to the image of God, as on the sixth day man was made to the likeness of God.* For then the law of God is fulfilled, when that which He commanded is performed not for sake of temporal things, but for love of Him who gives the commandment. For who would not strive to love in return the most just and most merciful God, who† loved unjust and proud man to such a degree that He sent His only Son, by whom He made all things,‡ and who undergoing no change, but becoming man by assuming human nature, not only lived amongst men, but died for them and by their hands?

Therefore—that He might show that the first Testament was antiquated, under which, with the exception of a few patriarchs and prophets and hidden saints who were enlightened, a carnal people, representing the old man and living according to the flesh, desired temporal rewards from the Lord God, and received them as types of spiritual good—Christ manifested the New Testament of everlasting inheritance, in which man, renovated by the grace of God, should lead a new, that is, a spiritual life; and, becoming man, He despised all earthly goods to show that

* Gen. i, 27. † 1 John iv, 19. ‡ Rom. viii, 32.

they deserve to be despised; and He endured all earthly evils, which He taught us to endure, that men might not seek happiness in the former nor fear unhappiness in the latter. For He was born of a mother who, though inviolate, had conceived, and always remained inviolate, a virgin in conceiving, a virgin in bringing forth, a virgin at her death, and who was wedded to a carpenter; and thus He overcame the pride of carnal nobility. Being born too in the city of Bethlehem, which was so insignificant amongst the cities of Judea that even to-day it is called a village, He willed that no man should glory in the splendour of any earthly city. He, to whom all things belong and by whom all things were created, became poor, that no one who believed in Him might make bold to boast of earthly riches. Though all creation owned His everlasting sway, He would not be made king* by men, because He came to teach the path of humility to men who were separated from Him by pride. Though He is spiritually the bread of the hungry and the drink of the thirsty,† He who feeds all was hungry, and He by whom all that quenches thirst was created, was Himself thirsty; He who became our way to heaven was weary with a journey on earth; He by whom the dumb spoke and the deaf heard was as one dumb and deaf in presence of them that reviled Him;‡ He who loosed the bonds of the weak was Himself bound; He who took away the scourges of all suf-

* John vi, 15. † John vii, 37. ‡ Matt. xxvi, 63.

ferings from the bodies of men was scourged ;* He who put an end to our sufferings was crucified, and He died who raised the dead to life. But He also rose again to die no more, that no man might learn from Him so to despise death as though he were never to live again.

* Matt. xxvii, 26.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Descent of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost. The Spread of the Church

THEN, having comforted His disciples, He conversed with them for forty days,* and in their sight ascended into heaven; and fifty † days after His Resurrection He sent down the Holy Ghost upon them as He had promised, that charity being poured ‡ forth in their hearts by Him, they might be able to fulfil the law, not only without being burdened, but even with joy. The law was given to the Jews in ten commandments called the Decalogue,§ and these are reduced to two, namely, that we "love God with our whole heart, with our whole soul, and with our whole mind, and love our neighbour as ourselves." "For on these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets," ‖ as the Lord declared in the Gospel and taught by His own example.

For on the fiftieth day after the people of Israel had celebrated the first Pasch, immolating a lamb, and eating it, and signing their doorposts with its blood as a sign of salvation,¶ on that very day they received the law written by the finger of God, a term by which, as we have

* Acts i, 3, 9. † Ibid. ii, 2. ‡ Rom. v, 5.
§ Deut. v, 6-22. ‖ Matt. xxii, 37, 40
¶ Exod. xii, 22; xix, 1.

already seen, is signified the Holy Ghost.* So, too, after our Lord's passion and resurrection, which is the true Pasch,† on the fiftieth day the Holy Ghost Himself was sent down upon the apostles,‡ no longer signifying hard hearts by tables of stone; but, when they were all together in one place, suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire, and they began to speak with tongues in such a way that all who had come to them recognized each his own tongue; for to that city there were come Jews from the whole world, wheresoever they were dispersed, and had learned the divers tongues of divers nations. After that they preached Christ with all confidence, and performed many miracles in His name,§ so that the shadow of Peter, as he passed, touched a dead man and raised him to life.

But when the Jews witnessed so many signs worked in the name of Him whom, partly through envy and partly through ignorance, they had crucified, some were stirred up to persecute the apostles who preached Him. Others, to the number of many thousands, of the Jews, wondering still more that signs were wrought in the name of Him whom they had scoffed at as crushed and conquered, repented, and were converted and believed in Him. For they no longer hoped for earthly riches and an earthly kingdom from God, nor did they look forward to Christ as their promised king according to the flesh, but

* Luke xi, 20. † 1 Cor. v, 7. ‡ Acts ii, 2.
§ Acts v, 15.

they understood Him to be immortal, and loved Him who, while on earth, had endured such things at their hands for their sake, and had forgiven them their sins, even the shedding of His blood, and by His resurrection had taught them to hope for and desire immortality.

Therefore, now, mortifying the earthly desires of the old man, and fervent with the newness of the spiritual life, they sold all they had and laid the price of their possessions at the feet of the apostles, to be distributed to every one according as he had need.* And living together in Christian love and concord, neither did any man say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but all things were common unto them, and they had but one heart and one soul.†

After that they too suffered persecution from the carnal Jews, their fellow-citizens according to the flesh, and they were dispersed, that by their dispersion Christ might be more widely preached, and that they might imitate the patience of their Lord; for He who had meekly suffered at their hands commanded that they, being made meek, should suffer for Him.

Of the number of the persecutors of the saints was the apostle Paul,‡ who especially raged against the Christians; but afterwards, believing in Christ, and being made an apostle, he was sent to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and he suffered greater persecution for the name of Christ than he had exercised against the name of Christ. He established churches throughout

* Acts iv, 34 35. † Acts iv, 32. ‡ Acts viii, 3; ix, 1-30.

all the nations where he had sown the seed of the gospel, and as they had but abandoned the worship of idols and were yet untutored in the worship of one God, and could not easily sell what they had and distribute it to serve God, he commanded them to make oblations for the poor of the saints who were in the churches of Jerusalem and had believed in Christ. Thus by apostolic teaching he regarded the former as the soldiers of Christ, and the latter as the tributary provinces which furnished the pay of the soldiers, making Christ the corner-stone between them,* as was foretold by the prophet,† uniting in sincere charity, as it were, two walls coming from different points, that is, from the Jews and Gentiles.‡ But afterwards more severe and more frequent persecutions against the Church arose from the incredulous Gentiles, and every day the prediction of the Lord was fulfilled: "Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves." §

* Isa. xxviii, 16. † Rom. ix, 33. ‡ 1 Pet. ii, 6.
§ Matt. x, 16.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Church, the mystic Vine, spreads and is pruned by Persecution

BUT the vine, which, as the prophets and our Lord foretold, had put forth fertile branches throughout the world, grew more luxuriantly the more it was watered by the blood of martyrs.* And while they died in countless numbers for the true faith, the kingdoms which persecuted them desisted; and their pride being overcome, they were converted to the knowledge and worship of Christ. But it was necessary, as our Lord had foretold, that the vine should be pruned and that the withered branches should be cut off, that is those by whom heresies and schisms have been formed under the name of Christ, consisting of persons who sought not His glory, but their own, that by their opposition the Church might be more and more exercised and tried, and its doctrine and patience rendered illustrious.

All these things we know to have happened, just as we read that they were foretold long before; and as the first Christians who did not witness the accomplishment of them were moved by miracles to believe them, so, since we see that they have all been accomplished, as we read of

* John xv, 1.

them in the Scriptures, which were written long before their fulfilment, and in which all that was to come to pass was foretold and already described as present, we should be confirmed in faith, and endure and persevere in the Lord, believing that those things which still remain unfulfilled will, without doubt, come to pass. For in the same Scriptures we read of tribulations yet to come, and of the last day of judgement, when all the citizens of the two cities shall rise again in their bodies to render an account of their lives before the tribunal of Christ the Judge. For He who once vouchsafed to come in the lowliness of human nature, shall come in the brightness of power, and shall separate the good from the bad, and not only from those who would not believe in Him, but also from those who believed in Him to no purpose, and without fruit; and to the former He shall award an eternal kingdom with Himself, and to the latter eternal punishment with the devil. And as no joy in temporal things can be compared to the joy of eternal life which shall be the lot of the saints, so no torment of temporal punishment can be compared to the eternal punishment of the wicked.

CHAPTER XXV

The Dogma of the Resurrection of the Body is to be firmly believed

THEREFORE, dear brother, in the name and by the aid of Him in whom you have believed, be strengthened against the tongues of those who mock at our faith, and through whom the devil speaks deceitful words, desiring especially to deride our faith in the resurrection. But from your own case, believe that you shall exist, since you do exist; for though you had no existence before, you perceive that you now exist. For where was the structure of your body and the form of your members a few years ago before you were born, or even conceived in your mother's womb? Where was this size and stature of your body? Did it not come into existence from the depths of created nature, under the invisible and creating hand of the Lord God, and increasing in age grew to its present size and form?

Is it, then, a difficult thing for God, who in a moment collects the masses of the clouds from the recesses of heaven and covers the sky in an instant, to restore the quantity of your body as it was before, since He made it when it had no existence?

Believe, therefore, strongly and firmly, that all things which appear as it were to perish, and to be withdrawn from human eyes, are safe and entire to God's omnipotence. For without delay or difficulty He will restore those things

which His justice judges deserving of restoration, that men may render an account of their deeds in those bodies in which they performed them; and may receive in return either celestial glory in reward of their piety, or in punishment of their impiety a corruptible* condition of body which shall not be dissolved by death, but shall furnish material for everlasting torments.

Fly,† therefore, by unshaken faith and good morals, fly, dear brother, those torments where the tormentors never cease and the tormented never die; where it is death unending not to be able to die in torments. And be inflamed with love and desire of the everlasting life of the saints, where action wearies not nor rest makes indolent, where the praise of God never cloys, nor ceases; where there is no weariness in the mind nor fatigue in the body; where there is no want to make you desire help, and no poverty of your neighbour to be relieved. God shall be the whole delight and happiness of the holy city, which shall live in Him and by Him, in wisdom and beatitude. For as we hope and expect according to His promises, we shall be made like to the angels of God,‡ and like them and with them we shall enjoy face to face the Trinity, in whom we now walk by faith.§ For we believe what we do not see, that in reward of our faith we may merit to see and love what we believe, and may no longer confess in the words of faith and the sound of syllables, but may in purest and most loving contemplation behold the equality of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and

* "Corruptible" is here used in the sense of "passible."
† Louvain edition has "ad honos mores."
‡ Matt. xxii, 30. § 2 Cor. v, 7.

the unity of the Trinity, and how these three are one God.

Keep these truths fixed in your heart, and call upon God, in whom you believe, to defend you against the temptations of the devil; and be on your guard lest you be overcome by that enemy who, as a solace for his own condemnation, wickedly seeks to involve others in his damnation.

And it is not by means of those alone who hate the Christian name, and grieve that it has spread over the world, and who still desire to serve idols and the deceits of the devil that he makes bold to tempt Christians. He sometimes attempts this by means of those above-mentioned, who are cut off from the unity of the Church as from the vine. And care must be taken in a special manner not to be tempted by those who are within the Catholic Church, and whom she endures as chaff until the time of winnowing. For God deals patiently with them, that by their perversity He may exercise and strengthen the faith and prudence of the elect; and also because many of them too are corrected, and taking pity on their own souls are converted with great earnestness to appease the wrath of God. For by the patience of God all do "not treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath of the just judgement of God";* but His patience leads many to the most salutary sorrow of penance. And until this be accomplished, not only the patience but also the mercy of those who are on the right road is exercised through them.

For you will see many who are drunkards,

* Rom. ii, 5.

covetous, fraudulent, gamesters, adulterers, fornicators, wearers of sacrilegious amulets, men addicted to enchanters, fortune-tellers and sorcerers. You will perceive that the crowds who fill the churches on the festival days of the Christians fill also the theatres on the solemn days of the pagans; and seeing these things you will be tempted to imitate them. And do I say you will see these things? For even now assuredly you know them; for you are not ignorant that many who are called Christians do all these things which I have now mentioned. Nor are you ignorant that sometimes perhaps men whom you know to be Christians do even worse than these things. But if you come that you may do the like with impunity, you are in great error, nor will the name of Christian avail you when He shall begin to judge most severely, who before was wont to aid most mercifully. For He foretold these things; and He says in the Gospel: "Not every one that saith to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father, who is in heaven.* For many shall say to Me on that day: 'Lord, Lord, we have eaten and drunk in Thy name,'" † etc. The end therefore, of those who persevere in such things is damnation. When, therefore, you shall see many not only do these things but even defend and counsel them, hold fast to the law of God, and follow not them who swerve from it; for it is not according to their opinions but according to His truth that you shall be judged. Join your-

* Matt. vii, 21.

† Luke xiii, 26. The Vulgate has *coram te;* St Augustine reads *in nomine tuo.*

self to the good whom you perceive to love your King; for you will find many such, if you begin to be yourself such. For if in the entertainments of the theatre you desired to unite with those who admired the same charioteer, or gladiator, or actor as you, how much more should you delight to be united to those who, like you, love God, of whom His lovers shall never be ashamed, and who renders them that love Him invincible?

Nor ought you to place your hope in the good men who have gone before you or who accompany you in going to God, nor in yourself however much you may advance; but you ought to place it in Him who, by justifying both them and you, has made you just. You can trust in God, for He does not change; but in men no man can prudently trust.* But since we ought to love those who are not just, that they may become just, how much more ardently ought we to love those who are already just! But it is one thing to love men, and quite a different thing to place one's hope in them; and so great is the difference that God commands the former and forbids the latter. Now if you suffer insults and tribulations for the name of Christ, and do not abandon the faith nor swerve from the right path, you shall receive a greater reward; while they who in such trials yield to the devil, lose even the little merit they possessed. "Be you humbled,"† therefore, towards God, that He "may not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able."‡

* Jer. xvii, 5. † 1 Peter, v, 6. ‡ 1 Cor. x, 13.

CHAPTER XXVI

The Admission of the Catechumen. Explanation of the Ceremonies. Specimen of a short Instruction.

AFTER a discourse such as the foregoing, the person under instruction should be asked whether he believes these things, and desires to observe them. And if he answers in the affirmative, he is then to be signed with the sign of the cross, and treated after the manner of the Church.* And concerning the sacramental rites to which he is admitted, he should be instructed that the signs of holy things are visible, but that invisible things are honoured in them; and that the matter which has been sanctified by blessing is not to be regarded in the same light as when we make use of it in daily life. And he should be informed of the signification of the sign and of the savour which the words of blessing produce in him as the rite signifies. Moreover, he should be admonished on this occasion that if he finds anything in the Scriptures which seems to have a carnal sense, he should, even if he does not understand it, believe it to have a spiritual signification pertaining to good morals and to the life to come.

* Catechumens were signed with the sign of the cross, and salt was given them as a type of wisdom. St Augustine, in his *Confessions,* lib. I, c. xi, says: "Et signabar jam signo crucis ejus, et condiebar ejus sale jam inde ab utero matris meæ, quæ multum speravit in te."

Let him in a few words be given to understand that whatever he hears from the Canonical books which cannot be referred to the love of eternity and truth and sanctity, and to the love of the neighbour, is to be interpreted as said or done figuratively; and let him endeavour so to understand it as to refer it to both branches of charity. Nor must he understand by his neighbour his carnal relations, but every one who is capable of being his fellow-citizen in that holy city, whether he appears to be such now or not; nor should he despair of the correction of any man who, by the patience of God, is allowed to live for no other purpose, as the apostle says, than that he may be brought to penance.*

If this discourse, in which we have given you a model of an address to the uninstructed, seems to you too long, it may be shortened; but, in my opinion, it ought not to be longer than this. Yet much depends on what the circumstances suggest at the moment, and on what the audience expects or is capable of profiting by.

When there is need of brevity, the whole subject may be easily explained as follows. Let us suppose that some one desiring to be a Christian has presented himself, and that on being interrogated he has answered as in the previous example; for if he answers differently he should be taught how he should have answered. Then the discourse may be to the following effect:

Verily, dear brother, that happiness which is promised to the saints in the world to come is great and true. All visible things pass away,

* Rom. ii, 4.

and all the pomp of this world, with its delights and vanities, shall perish and drag those that love them into destruction. Desiring to set men free from that destruction, if they be not their own enemies and resist not grace, God in His mercy hath sent His only-begotten Son—that is the Word, equal to Himself, by whom all things were made; and the Word, remaining God and not departing from the Father nor changing in aught, but assuming human nature, appeared, and came unto men in mortal flesh; that as by one man, who was first created—that is Adam—"sin entered into the world,"* because he consented with his wife, who had been deceived by the devil, to transgress the commandment of God; so by one man, who is God and the Son of God, Jesus Christ, all past sins having been taken away, all who believe in Him might possess eternal life.

* Rom. v, 12.

CHAPTER XXVII

Short Instruction continued

FOR all that you now see done in the Church and in the name of Christ over the whole earth was foretold long before; and as we read of it so we see it accomplished, and we are thereby confirmed in faith. Formerly the deluge took place over the whole earth for the destruction of sinners,* and they who escaped in the ark were a figure of the future Church, which is now borne on the billows of the world, and is preserved from perishing by the wood of the cross of Christ.

It was foretold to one man, Abraham—a faithful servant of God†—that a nation would spring from him who would worship the one true God, while the other nations worshipped idols; and all things which it was foretold would happen to that people have happened as they were foretold. It was prophesied amongst that people that Christ, who is God and King of all nations, would come of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, which He assumed that all might be children of Abraham who should imitate his faith; and so it has come to pass. Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, who was of that race. It was foretold by the prophets that He would be crucified, and so it came to pass. It was

* Gen. vii, 17. † Gen. xii, 3.

foretold that He would rise again, and He rose again; and according to the prophecies He ascended into heaven, and from thence He sent the Holy Ghost upon His apostles.

It was foretold, not only by the prophets but by Jesus Christ Himself, that His Church would extend throughout the whole world, and be spread by means of the sufferings and the martyrdom of the saints; and this was foretold at a time when its name was unknown amongst the nations, and was laughed to scorn where known. Yet, through the miracles performed by Christ Himself or by His disciples, whilst these things were preached they were believed, and we now see that what was foretold has been accomplished; and the kings of the earth who persecuted the Christians have been made obedient to the name of Christ.

It was predicted that schisms and heresies would go out from the Church, and would seek not His glory but their own wherever they could; and these prophecies have been fulfilled. Will not the remaining prophecies therefore be fulfilled? It is plain that, as those prophecies were fulfilled, so these also will be fulfilled regarding the tribulations yet to come for the just and the day of judgement, which shall separate the wicked from the just at the resurrection of the dead; and that not only in respect to such as are outside the Church, but also as regards the chaff within the Church itself, which she must patiently endure until the final winnowing which shall consign them to the fire they deserve.*

* Matt. iii, 12.

They who deride the resurrection, imagining that as the flesh decays it cannot rise again, shall rise again in the flesh to punishment; and God shall show them that He, who could make their bodies when yet they were not, can restore them in an instant. All the faithful who shall reign with Christ shall rise again in the same bodies in such a way as to merit to be changed into equality with the angels, so that they "shall be like the angels of God,"* as the Lord Himself has promised; and they shall praise Him without ceasing and without weariness, always living in Him and by Him with such joy and happiness as can neither be expressed nor imagined by man.

Do you, therefore, since you believe these things, beware of temptation (for the devil seeks to draw others with him into ruin), and take heed that the enemy does not seduce you, not alone by those who are without the Church, such as pagans, Jews and heretics, but even by those who are within the Church, whom you shall see leading wicked lives—the intemperate and the unchaste, those addicted to vain curiosity, shows, charms and soothsaying, or the slaves of pride and avarice, or any other kind of life which the law condemns and punishes. Imitate not these, but rather join with the good, whom you shall easily discover if you yourself are such, and with them love and serve God freely, for He Himself shall be our reward, and we shall enjoy His goodness and His beauty.

But He must not be loved like anything

* Matt. xxii, 30.

which is seen with the eyes, but as wisdom, truth [sanctity and justice and charity, or any other virtue,]* are loved, not as they are in men, but in the very fountain-head of incorruptible and unchangeable wisdom. Whomsoever you shall see to love these things, join with these, that through Christ, who was made man to be "the mediator of God and men,"† you may be reconciled to God. And even if wicked men enter within the walls of the Church, do not suppose that they will enter the kingdom of heaven; for if they do not amend they shall in due time be separated. Imitate therefore the good, bear with the wicked; love all, for you know not what he shall be to-morrow who is wicked to-day. Love not their injustice, but love themselves, that they may lay hold on justice, for it is not the love of God only which is commanded, but the love of the neighbour also, and on these two commandments the whole law and the prophets depend.‡ He does not fulfil this commandment who has not received as a gift the Holy Ghost, who is equal to the Father and the Son, for the Trinity is God, and in God all hope is to be placed.§ Hope is not to be placed in man, whoever he may be. For He by whom we are justified is different from those who are justified with us.

And not only does the devil tempt us by concupiscence, but also by the fear of insults and of

* The words in brackets are wanting in most MSS.

† 1 Tim. ii, 5. ‡ Matt. xxii, 37-40.

§ Before receiving baptism catechumens were instructed in the Symbol or Creed and the Lord's Prayer. After baptism they were instructed regarding confirmation and the Holy Eucharist.—See the Catecheses of St Cyril of Jerusalem.

death. Now whatsoever a man shall suffer and persevere in suffering for the name of Christ, the greater reward shall be given him. But if he yields to the devil he shall be condemned with him. But works of mercy combined with piety and humility will obtain from the Lord that He shall not suffer His servants to be tempted above that which they are able.*

* 1 Cor. x, 13.

THE VIRTUES OF THE CLERICAL STATE

BY ST JEROME

A Treatise on the Virtues of the Clerical State*

By ST JEROME

St Jerome to Nepotianus, of the Life which a Priest ought to lead. Whereof I have omitted the former part, or rather preface, which is both very long and but personal, and not belonging at all to the chief matter in hand, which is what lives priests are to lead.†

HEARKEN, as the blessed Cyprian advises, not to such things as are eloquently delivered, but

* Taken from an old English version made A.D. 1630.

† Nepotian, to whom this short treatise is addressed, was nephew of Heliodorus, bishop of Altinum. This treatise was written about A.D. 394. About two years later Nepotian died, and St Jerome addressed to Heliodorus a letter entitled "Epitaphium Nepotiani," in which, amongst other encomiums, he speaks of him thus: "Cœcorum baculus, esurientium cibus, spes miserorum, solamen lugentium fuit. . . . Creber in orationibus, vigilans in precando . . . . lectione assidua et meditatione pectus suum bibliothecam fecerat Christi. . . . Alii nummum addant nummo. . . . Nepotianus noster aurum calcans schedulas consectatur. . . . Erat ergo solicitus si niteret altare, si parietes absque fuligine, si pavimenta tersa, si janitor creber in porta, vela semper in ostiis, si sacrarium mundum, si vasa luculenta, et in omnes cæremonias pia sollicitudo disposita, non minus, non majus negligebat officium. Ubicumque eum quæreres, in ecclesia invenires."

to such as have strength and truth in them. Hearken to him who in function is your brother, in age your father, who brings you from the swathing clothes of faith to a perfect age, and who, setting down rules throughout all the steps of your life, may instruct others also by your means. I well know both that you have already learned such things as are holy, and that you are daily learning them, of the blessed man Heliodorus, your uncle, who is now a bishop of Christ, and the example of whose virtue may be the very rule of a man's life. But yet accept of these our endeavours, how poor soever they may be, and join you this book to his, that as he instructed you how you might be a monk, this may teach you how to be a perfect priest.

On Contempt of Riches

A PRIEST,* therefore, who serves the Church, let him first interpret that word, and when he hath defined the same let him strive to be that very thing which the word signifies. For if the word κλῆρος in Greek do signify portion† in Latin, then it will follow that priests are called so either because they are of the portion of our Lord or else because our Lord is the portion or part of priests. But he who is either the part of our Lord, or who hath our Lord for his part, ought to show himself to be such an one as that he possesses our Lord and is possessed of our Lord. He who possesses our Lord and saith with the prophet, "Our Lord is my part," can possess nothing but our Lord, and if he will have anything besides

* "Clericus" is the word in the original Latin.
† Ps. xv, 5; lxxii, 26.

Him, our Lord will not be his part. As for example, if he will have gold, silver or choice costly household stuff, our Lord with these parts will not vouchsafe to be his part. And if I be the part of our Lord, and the bounder * whereby his inheritance is measured, and do not take a part among the rest of the tribes, but as a Levite and priest do live of the tenths, and serving the altar do live upon the oblations of the altar; if I may have food and clothing, I will be content therewith, and being naked, I will follow the naked cross.

I beseech you, therefore, and repeating my suit to you again and again, I will admonish you that you think not the office of the priesthood to be a kind of warfare after the old fashion; that is to say, that you seek not the commodities of the world in the warfare of Christ, and that you procure not to be richer than when you began to be a priest, and that it be not said of you, "Their priests have not been of profit to them."† [For many have been richer being monks than when they were secular persons and priests. There are some who possess more riches now in the service of Christ, being poor, than formerly they possessed by their service under the rich and false devil; and the Church doth even groan with their being rich, whom before the world knew for beggars.] ‡

* Funiculus (a line). † Jer. xii, 13, Septuagint version.

‡ The words in brackets are not found in most editions. The Benedictine editor says, "Nihil simile legimus in MSS codicibus viginti." The same words however are found in the epitaph of Nepotian, whence they may have been transferred as a marginal note, and then have crept into the text.

On Avoiding Familiarity with Seculars

LET your table be frequented by poor people and pilgrims, and let Christ be a guest with them. See you fly, as you would do the plague, any priest who is a negotiator of affairs, and who grows rich of poor, and glorious instead of base. "Ill speech corrupts good manners."* You contemn gold, another man loves it; you tread riches under your feet, another man hunts after it; you cordially love silence, meekness, recollection, but another loves prating and boldness, and takes no pleasure but in streets and market-places, fairs, and to be sitting in apothecaries' shops. In such a difference of manners what agreement can there be?

On Prudence in Treating with Women

LET your house† either seldom or never be trodden upon by women's feet; and be you either equally ignorant, or do you equally like all the maids and virgins of Christ. Do not dwell with them under the same roof, and presume not upon your former chastity. You are not holier than David,‡ nor can you be wiser than Solomon. Be ever remembering how a woman cast the inhabitant of Paradise out of his possession.§ When you are sick, let some devout brother of yours assist you, and some sister, or your mother, or some other woman who is of untouched fame with the world. If you have not perhaps of your consanguinity, who are withal of

* 1 Cor. xv, 33.
† For "hospitolium" another reading is "ostiolium.
‡ Some editions have also "Samsone fortior."
§ Gen. iii.

piety, the Church entertains many old widows who may perform that duty and receive some benefit by their service, so that your sickness may enable you to gather their fruit of alms. I know of some who have recovered in body and begun to fall sick in mind. She affords you a dangerous kind of service, upon whose countenance you are often looking with attention. If in regard you are a priest, some virgin or widow must needs be visited by you, yet never go into their house alone. Take such company with you as may not defame you by their society. If some lector or acolyte, or some other who hath the office of singing in the church, follow you, let them not be adorned with clothes, but good conditions; nor have their hair curled with irons, but promise virtue by the very appearance of their persons. Sit never with any woman alone in secret and without some witness or looker-on. If you be to say anything in a familiar manner, the woman hath some ancient person belonging to her house, or some virgin, or wife, or widow, she is not so inhuman as that she hath none besides you with whom she dares trust herself. See you be careful of giving no ground to suspicions, and procure to prevent whatsoever may probably be devised against you. A holy affection doth not admit of the use of frequent presents, and handkerchiefs, and scarves, and garments which have been kissed, and meat which hath been tasted to your hand, nor the changing of certain dear delightful letters. These words, "my light," "my honey," "my desire," and all those delicacies and conceits and certain civilities which deserve to be derided, and the rest of those toys of lovers we blush at

even in comedies, we detest even in secular men; and, therefore, how much more are we to do it in the case of monks and priests, whose priesthood is adorned by their chastity, and their chastity by their priesthood! Neither do I say this much as fearing these things in you, or in holy men, but because there are found good and bad in every course, in every degree and sex, and the condemnation of the wicked serves for the commendation of the good.

On Disinterestedness

I AM ashamed* to say the priests of idols, jesters, carters, queans may inherit lands; † only priests and monks may not; and this is prohibited not by persecutors, but by Christian princes. Nor do I complain against the law, but I am sorry we have deserved that such a law should be made. A cautery is a good remedy, but why should I have a wound which should stand in need of such a cure? The caution of the law is not only provident, but severe; yet covetousness is not bridled even thereby. We over-reach the laws by certain deeds made in trust; and as if the ordinations of emperors were of more authority we than they of Christ. We fear their laws and contemn His gospels. Let there be an heir, but withal let there be the mother of the children,

* The old translation has the first clause of this sentence joined to the previous paragraph; we have arranged the paragraph according to the Latin text in the Benedictine and Migne's editions.

† A constitution of the Emperor Valentinian ordered that "neque per subjectam personam valerent clerici aut monachi aliquid vel donatione vel testamento percipere." Bequests however in favour of churches were valid. That constitution was abrogated by the Emperor Marcian.—Note from Migne's edition.

that is to say the Church of the flock, which has bred, nourished and fed them. Why do we interpose ourselves between the mother and the children? It is the glory of a bishop to provide for the commodities of poor people, and it is the ignominy of priests to attend to acquire riches. I who have been born in a poor house, or rather in a country cottage, who scarce had means to fill my windy stomach with the basest grain and rye bread, can now scarce think of the finest flour and honey with contentment. I am also come to know the names and kind of fishes, yea, and upon what part of the coast such a shell-fish was taken; and in the taste of fowl I discern the difference of countries, and the rarity of these meats; yea, and even the very hurt they do men by dearly buying them delights me.

I understand that some priests perform certain base services to old men and women, who have no children. They hold the spitting basin, they besiege the bed round about, and they sometimes take the foul phlegm of the stomach and of the lungs, in their very hands. They tremble when the physician comes to make his visit, and their lips shake with fear when they ask him if the sick man be mended; and if the old man chance to be grown better or stronger, themselves are endangered by it. For taking a face of joy upon them their covetous mind is racked within, as fearing lest they may lose their hope of gain; but then again they will needs compare the lively old man to Mathusalem. Oh, how great would their reward be at the hand of God, if they expected no reward in this life! What sweating doth the getting of such a poor inheritance cost! The

pearl of Christ might be sought at an easier rate.

On the Study of the Scripture, on the respect due to Bishops and on Preaching

BE diligent in reading the holy Scriptures, or rather let that divine book be never laid out of your hands. Learn that which you are to teach. Procure to be able to use that faithful speech, which is according to knowledge, that you may be able to exhort men with sound doctrine, and so confute such as contradict you. Stand fast in those things which you have learned, and which are committed to your trust, as knowing of whom you have learned; and be ever ready to give satisfaction to such as demand a reason at your hands of that faith and hope which is in you. Let not your ill deeds put your words out of countenance, lest somebody who hears you speak at church make this answer to you within himself: "Why do you not practise what you say?" He is a delicate instructor who discourses of fasting when his belly is full. Even a murdering thief may be able to cry out against covetousness. Let the mind and the hands of the priest of Christ keep correspondence with his mouth.

Be subject to your bishop, and revere him as the father of your soul. It is for a son to love, and for a slave to fear. "If I be thy father," saith he, "where is mine honour? If I be thy lord, where is the fear which is due to me?"* In his person, which is but one, there are many several titles to be considered by you: a monk, a bishop and an uncle of your own, who already

* Mal. i, 6.

hath instructed you concerning all good things. You shall also know that bishops must understand themselves to be priests and not lords; let them honour priests as priests, that priests may defer all honour to them as to bishops. That of the orator Domitius* is vulgarly known: "Why should I carry myself towards you as towards a prince, when you regard not me as a senator?"

That which Aaron and his sons were in relation to one another, that must the bishop and the priests be. "There is one lord and one temple," and the mystery also must be one. Let us ever remember what the apostle Peter enjoineth priests: "Feed that flock of our Lord which is among you, providing for it according to God, not after a compulsive but free and cheerful manner; not for filthy lucre's sake, but willingly; nor as exercising dominion over the clergy, but after the form of a shepherd over his flock, to the end that when the Prince of Pastors shall appear you may receive an immarcessible crown of glory."†

It is an extreme ill custom in some churches that priests are silent and refuse to speak in the presence of bishops, as if bishops envied them so much honour or would not vouchsafe to hear them. But St Paul saith: "If a thing be revealed to any man who sits by, let the former hold his peace. For you may prophesy by turns, that all may learn and all may be comforted; and the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets, for God is not a God of dissension

* All the MSS. read "Domitius," but "Illud Crasso attribuunt Cicero, Val. Max., Fab."—Note in Benedictine edition.

† 1 Peter v, 2-4.

but of peace." * It is a glory to the father when he hath a wise son ; † and let a bishop take comfort when he has chosen such priests for the service of Christ.

When you are preaching in the church let not the people make a noise, but let them profoundly sigh. Let the tears of your auditors be your praise. Let the discourse of a priest be seasoned by reading holy Scripture. I will not have you a declaimer nor a jangler, nor to be full of talk without reason, but skilful in the mysteries and most excellently instructed in the sacraments of your God. It is the use of unlearned men to toss words up and down, and by a swift kind of speech in the ears of an unskilful auditory to hunt after admiration. A bold man will interpret many times he knows not what, and in the persuasion which he uses to others he arrogates the reputation of knowledge to himself. Gregory Nazianzen, mine old master, being desired by me to expound what that Sabbath called δευτεροπρῶτον, meant in Luke, he did elegantly allude thus : I will instruct you about this business when we are at church, where, the whole people applauding me,‡ you shall be forced, whether you will or no, to know that whereof you are ignorant now. There is nothing so easy as to deceive a poor, base people and an unlearned assembly by volubility of speech, which admires whatsoever it understands not. Marcus Tullius—of whom this eulogium was used :

* 1 Cor. xiv, 30-35. † Prov. x, 1.

‡ At this period it was not unusual for the people to applaud the preacher in the church.—See St Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, lib. IV, c. xxiv.

"Demosthenes deprived you of being the first orator, and you him of being the only orator"—saith that in his oration for Quintus Gallus, concerning the favour of the people and such as speak absurdly before them, which I would fain have you mark, lest you be abused by these errors. I speak of that whereof myself have lately had experience. A certain poet—a man of name and learned—who made certain dialogues of poets and philosophers, when in one and the same place he brings in Euripides and Menander, and Socrates and Epicurus, discoursing all together one with another, whom yet we know to have lived not only at different times but in different ages—what applause did he not move! For in the theatre he had many co-disciples who performed not their studies together.

On Simplicity in Dress, in Buildings and in Entertainments

BE as careful to avoid black coarse clothes * as white. Fly from affected ornaments at as full speed as you would do from affected uncleanness; for the one savours of delicacy, and the other hath a taste of vain-glory. It is a commendable thing, I say not to use no linen, but not to be worth any; for otherwise it is a ridiculous thing and full of infamy to have the purse well filled, and then to brag that you are not worth so much as a handkerchief. There are some who give some little things to the poor to the end that they may receive more, and some men seek after

* Peter of Cluny rightly interprets these words as condemning display of dress, not colour.

wealth under the pretence of using charity, which is rather to be accounted a kind of hunting than almsgiving. So are beasts and birds, and so are fishes taken—some little bait is laid on the hook that the money-bag of the matrons may be brought forth upon that hook.

Let the bishop to whom the care of the church is committed consider whom he appoints to oversee the dispensation of goods to the poor. For it is better for a man not to have anything to give away, than imprudently to beg somewhat for himself to hide. Nay, it is a kind of arrogancy for one to seem more meek and merciful than the priest of Christ is. We cannot all do all things; some one is an eye in the Church, another is a tongue, another a hand, another a foot, an ear or a belly, and so forth. Read the Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians,* how divers members serve to constitute one body. But yet let not the rustic and simple man think himself to be holy because he knows nothing. Nor if a man be eloquent and skilful must he esteem that he hath as much sanctity as he hath tongue; and of the two defects it is much better that he have a holy rudeness than a sinful eloquence.

Many build up walls and raise pillars in churches; the marbles shine, the roofs glitter with gold, the altar is set with precious stones, and the while no care is taken to choose fit ministers for Christ. Let no man object to me that rich temple of the Jews, the table, the lamps, the incensories, the basins, the cups, the mortars, and other things made of gold. Then were

* 1 Cor. xii, 12-31

these things approved by our Lord, when the priests did immolate sacrifices, and when the blood of beasts was the redemption of sins. Though all these things did go before in figure, "yet they were written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the world are come."* But now when our Lord by being poor hath dedicated the poverty of His house, let us think upon His cross, and esteem of riches as of dirt. What marvel is it that Christ called riches by the name of "unjust mammon?"† Why should we admire and love that which Peter‡ doth, even after a kind of glorious manner, profess himself not to have? For otherwise if we only follow the letter, and that yet the appearance of the history, speaking of gold and riches, delight us, then together with the gold let us take up other things too. Let the bishops of Christ marry virgins and make them their wives. If that argument, I say, be to hold, then let him who hath any scar or other corporal deformity be deprived of his priesthood, though he hath a virtuous mind; and let the leprosy of the body be accounted a worse thing than the vices of the soul. Let us increase and multiply and fill the earth; and let us not sacrifice the Lamb, nor celebrate the mystical Pasch, because these things are forbidden by the law to be done elsewhere than in the temple. "Let us fasten the tabernacle in the seventh month, and let us chant out the solemn fast with the sound of the cornet." But now, if comparing all these to spiritual things, and knowing with Paul that "the law is

* 1 Cor. x, 11. † Luke xvi, 9. ‡ Acts iii, 6.

spiritual," * and that the words of David are true, who sings thus: "Open Thou mine eyes, and I will consider the wonderful things of Thy law," † we understand them as our Lord also understood them; and as He interpreted the Sabbath, either let us despise gold with the rest of the superstition of the Jews, or else, if we shall like gold, let us also like the Jews, whom of necessity we must either like or dislike together with the gold.

The feasting of secular persons, and especially of such as swell up in high place of honour, must be avoided by you. It is an ugly thing that before the doors of a priest of Christ crucified, who was so poor, and had no meat of His own the officers of consuls and bands of soldiers should stand waiting, and that the governor of the province should dine better at your house than at the court. If you shall pretend that you do such things as these, to the end that you may obtain favour for inferior and miserable people, know that a temporal judge will defer more to a mortified priest than to a rich one, and will carry more veneration to your virtue than to your wealth. Or if he be such a one as that he will not favour priests speaking for afflicted persons, but when he is in the midst of his cups, I shall be well content to want the obtaining of such a suit; and will pray to Christ instead of the judge, who can help me better and sooner than he. "It is better to confide in our Lord than to confide in man. It is better to hope in our Lord than to hope in princes."‡

* Rom. vii, 14. † Ps. cxviii, 18. ‡ Ps. cxvii, 8, 9.

See that your breath do not so much as smell of wine, lest you deserve to hear that saying of the philosopher, "This is not to give me a salute but to drink to me in wine." As for priests who are wine-bibbers, both the apostle condemns them,* and the old law forbids them, saying: "They who serve at the altar must drink no wine or sicera,"† by which word *sicera* in the Hebrew tongue all such drinks are meant whereby any man may be inebriated; whether they be made of wheat, or of the juice of fruit, or when together with fruit they take honey, and make a sweet and barbarous potion thereof, or else strain the fruit of palms till they yield liquor; or by the boiling up of corn give a different colour‡ and strength to water. Whatsoever may inebriate and overthrow the state of the mind you must avoid with as much care as you would do wine. Neither yet do I say this as condemning the creature of God, since our Lord Himself was called a drinker of wine,§ and the taking of a little wine was permitted to the weak stomach of Timothy;‖ but we require a moderation in the use thereof, according to the quality of constitutions, and to the proportion of age and health. But yet if without wine I burn with youth, and am inflamed by the heat of my blood, and am indued with a young and strong body, I will gladly spare that cup wherein there is a suspicion of poison. It sounds elegant in Greek, but I know not whether it will carry the

* 1 Tim. iii, 3. † Lev. x, 9.

‡ "Coloratur" is the reading in all editions. Migne suggests "colatur."

§ Matt xi, 19. ‖ 1 Tim. v, 23.

same grace with us: A fatful belly doth not beget a slender and well-proportioned mind.*

On avoiding Singularity in Fasting and in Works of Piety

IMPOSE as great a measure of fasting upon yourself as you are able to bear. Let your fasts be pure, chaste, simple, moderate, and not superstitious. To what purpose is it that a man will needs forbear the use of oil, and then undergo certain vexations and difficulties, how to get and make meat which he may eat, as dried figs, pepper, nuts, the fruit of palms, honey and pistachios? The whole husbandry of the kitchen garden is vexed from one end to the other, that forsooth we may be able to abstain from so much as rye bread, and whilst we hunt after delicacies we are drawn back from the kingdom of heaven. I hear besides that there are certain persons who, contrary to the nature of men and other creatures, drink no water and eat no bread. But they must have certain delicate little drinks, and shred herbs and the juice of beets, and that forsooth they will not drink in a cup, but needs in the shell of some fish. Fie upon this shameful absurdity, and that we blush not of these follies, and are not weary with scorn at these superstitions, besides that we seek for a fame of abstinence even in the use of a delicacy! The most strong fast of all others is of bread and water; but because it carries not such honour with it, because we all live with the use of water

* Παχεῖα γαστὴρ λεπτὸν οὐ τίκτει νόον.—Note in Migne.

and bread, it is scarce thought to be a fast, in regard that it is so usual and common. Take heed you hunt not after certain little estimations of men, lest you make purchase of the people's praise with the offence of God. "If yet," saith the apostle, "I should please men, I should not be the servant of Christ."* He ceased from pleasing men and became the servant of Christ. The soldier of Christ marches on both through good fame and bad, both by the right hand and by the left, and is neither extolled by praise nor is he beaten down by dispraise. He doth not swell up with riches, nor is he extenuated by poverty, and he contemns both those things which might gain him joy and those also which may afflict. "The sun burns him not by day, nor the moon by night."†

I will not have you pray at the corners of streets, lest the air of a popular fame divert your prayers from the right way to their journey's end. I will not have you enlarge the borders nor make ostentation of the skirts of your garments, and against your conscience to be environed by a pharisaical kind of ambition. How much better were it not to carry these things in the exterior, but at the heart, and to obtain favour in the sight of God rather than in the eyes of men! Hereupon hangs the Gospel, hereupon the law and the prophets, and the holy and apostolical doctrine, for it is better to carry all these things in the mind than in the body. You who read this faithfully with me according to a faithful and right intention do understand even that

* Gal. i, 10. † Ps. cxx, 6.

which I conceal, and which I speak so much louder even because I am silent. You must have eye to as many rules as you may be tempted with kinds of glory.

Will you know what kind of ornaments our Lord desires to see in you? Procure to have prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude. Be you enclosed by these coasts of the sky. Let this chariot of four horses carry you on with speed to the end of the race as the chariot-driver of Christ.* There is nothing more precious than this jewel, nothing more beautiful than the variety of these precious stones. You shall be beautified on every side; you shall be compassed in and protected; they will both defend you and adorn you, and these gems will become bucklers to you.

What is to be avoided in Conversation

TAKE you also heed that you have neither an itching tongue nor ears; that is to say, that neither yourself detract from others nor that you endure to hear detractors. "Sitting," saith he, "thou spakest against thy brother, and thou laidst scandal before the son of thy mother; these things didst thou, and I held my peace. Thou didst wickedly think that I would be like thee, but I will reprove thee before thy face."†

Take care you have not a detracting tongue, and be watchful over your words, and know that you are judged by your own conscience in all

* We correct here the old translation, which has "And let the chariot driven by Christ," which may be a variant. The Latin is "Velut aurigam Christi."

† Ps. xlix, 20, 21.

these things which you speak of others, and of those things which you condemn in other folks yourself is found guilty. Nor is that a just excuse when you say that you do no wrong when you do but hear the report of others. No man reports things to another who hears them unwillingly. An arrow enters not into a stone, but, starting back, sometimes it hurts him who shot it. Let the detractor learn that he is not to detract in your hearing, whom he finds to hear him so unwillingly. "Do not mingle yourself," saith Solomon, "with detractors, because his destruction shall come suddenly, and who knows how soon they both shall be ruined?"*—that is to say, he who detracts and he who gives audience to detractors. It is your duty to visit the sick, to be well acquainted with the houses of matrons and their children, and to keep safe the secret of great persons. It is your duty not only to have chaste eyes, but a chaste tongue also.

You must never dispute nor argue about the beauties of women, nor ever let any house understand by you, what hath passed in any other house. Hippocrates adjured his disciples before he taught them, and made them swear to follow his directions, and commanded them religiously to promise silence, and prescribed the speech, the gait, the habit, and the conversation which they were to use. How much more must we to whom the charge of souls is committed love the houses of all Christians as our own! Let them know us to be rather comforters of them

* Prov. xxiv, 21, 22.

in their afflictions, than companions and feasters with them in their prosperity. That priest is ordinarily contemned who, being often invited to dinner, doth not refuse to go. Let us never desire to be invited, and even when we are invited, let us go seldom. "It is a more blessed thing to give than to receive." And it is strange, but so it is, that even he who desires you to receive a courtesy at his hands, thinks the meanlier of you, when you have accepted thereof; and doth strangely honour you afterwards if you chance to lay aside that request of his.

You who are a preacher of chastity must not meddle with making of marriages. He who reads the apostle saying thus, "It remains that they who have wives, be so as if they had them not,"* why should he compel a virgin to marry? He who is a priest after having been married but once, why should he exhort a widow to marry again?

On Fidelity in the Dispensation of Alms

THE stewards and overseers of other men's houses and possessions, how can they be priests who are commanded to contemn their own fortunes? To take anything violently from a man's friend is theft; to deceive the Church is sacrilege; to take away that which was to be distributed upon the poor, and when there are many hungry people to be reserved or wary, or (which is a most abominable crime) to take their due from them, doth exceed the cruelty of any

* 1 Cor. vii, 29.

robber by the highway. I am tormented with hunger, and you will be measuring out how much I may have an appetite to eat. Either distribute that presently which you have received, or else if you be a timorous dispenser, turn it back upon the proprietary, that he may bestow his own. I will not have your purse to be filled by occasion of dispensing my goods. No man can better dispose of my things than myself. He is the best dispenser who reserves nothing for his own use.

You have compelled me, most dear Nepotianus (after the book which I wrote to holy Eustochium at Rome, concerning the custody of virginity, which hath been stoned to death), that now again I have unsealed my mouth at Bethlehem,* and have laid myself open to be stabbed by the tongues of all men. For either I must write nothing, lest I should become subject to men's censures, which you forbade me to regard, or else I must know when I wrote that the darts of all ill-speaking tongues would be turned against me. But I beseech them to be quiet, and that they will give over to backbite. For we have not written this as to adversaries, but as to friends; nor have we made any invective against them who sin, but only advised them not to do so. Nor have we only been severe judges against such as do ill, but against ourselves also; and being desirous to pick the mote out of another's eye, I have first cast the beam out of mine own. I have done no man wrong, nor pointed at any man's name in my writing. My

* The Benedictine Edition has "post decem annos."

speech hath not applied itself to particulars, but hath discoursed only in general against vice.* He who shall be angry with me will thereby confess himself to be in the fault.

* That St Jerome meant to point out what clerics should avoid, and not to speak of the faults of individuals, will be still more evident if we keep in view the account which St Augustine gives of the clergy about the same time. In his book "*De Moribus Ecclesiæ Catholicæ,*" having spoken of the virtues of monks, he continues as follows: "Neque tamen ita sese auguste habent Ecclesiæ Catholicæ mores optimi ut eorum tantum vitas quos commemoravi arbitrer esse laudandas. Quam enim multos episcopos, optimos viros, sanctissimosque cognovi quam multos presbyteros, quam multos diaconos et hujusmodi ministros divinorum sacramentorum, quorum virtus eo mihi mirabilior. et majore prædicatione dignior videtur, quo difficilius est eam in multiplici hominum genere, et in ista vita turbulenta, servare. Non enim sanatis magis quam sanandis hominibus præsunt. Perpetienda sunt vitia multitudinis ut curentur, et prius toleranda quam sedanda est pestilentia. Difficillimum est hic tenere optimum vitæ modum, et animum pacatum et tranquillum. Quippe ut breviter explicem, hi agunt ubi vivere discitur, illi ubi vivitur."—*De Moribus Ecc. Catholicæ,* lib. I, c. xxxii.

Appendix

A LIST OF SOME WRITERS ON SACRED ELOQUENCE

St John Chrysostom. De Sacerdotio, lib. IV, V.

St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. De Doctrina Christiana ; De Catechizandis Rudibus.

St Gregory the Great. De Cura Pastorali, lib. III, IV.

Raban Maur. De Institutione Clerici, lib. III, Cap. 28 to end.

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L'Abbé J. Berthier, S.M. Le Prêtre dans le Ministère de la Predication. 1900.

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